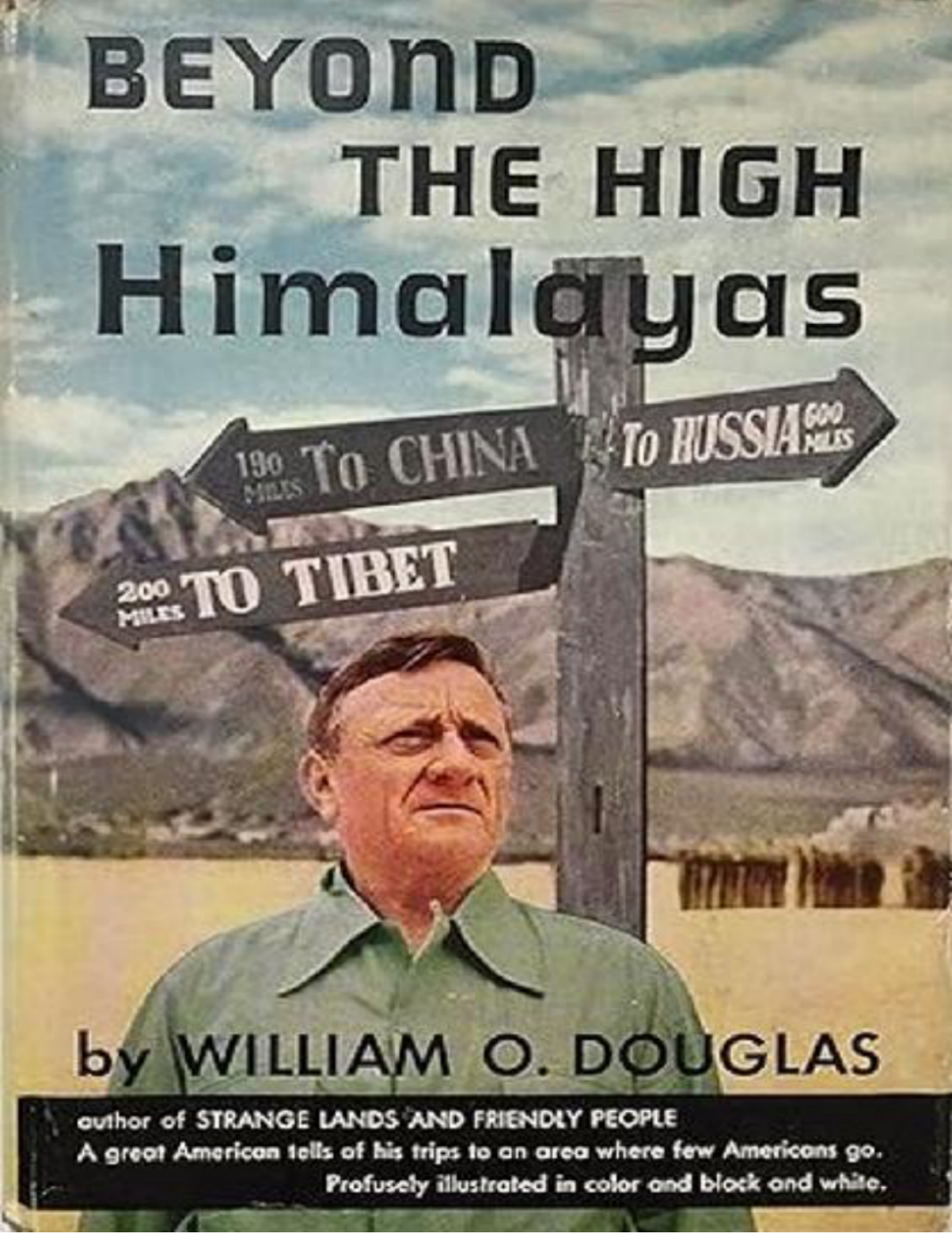
BEYOND THE HIGH Himalayas

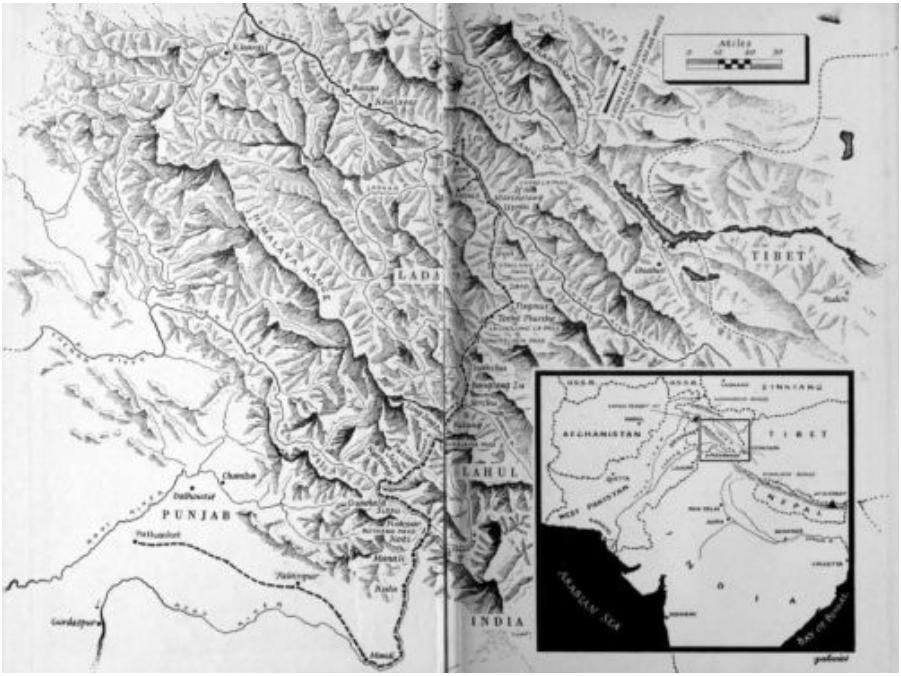


by WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS

author of STRANGE LANDS AND FRIENDLY PEOPLE

A great American tells of his trips to an area where few Americans go.

Profusely illustrated in color and black and white.


Miles
LADAK
TIBET
LAHUL
PUNJAB
INDIA
Dalhousie
Chamba
Gurdaspur
Pathankot
Kangra
Kullu
Manali
Rohtang Pass
Lhasa
Shigatse
Gyantse
Chumbi
Phagmo Yumtso
Yamdrok Tso
Tsangpo
Indus
Sutlej
Ravi
Chenab
Jhelum
Kashmir
Srinagar
Leh
Rudok
Gartok
Ladakh Range
Zanskar Range
Kailas
Manasarovar
Mt. Everest
Mt. Kanchenjunga
Mt. Nanga Parbat
Mt. Godwin Austen
Mt. Kamet
Mt. Nun Kun
Mt. Gurla Mandhata
Mt. Kailas
Mt. Dhaulagiri
Mt. Annapurna
Mt. Nanda Devi
Mt. Trisul
Mt. Kangchenjunga
Mt. Chomolhari
Mt. Jomolhari
Mt. Kinchinjunga
Mt. Kangchenjunga
Mt. Everest
Mt. Lhotse
Mt. Makalu
Mt. Cho Oyu
Mt. Gyachung Kang
Mt. Shishapangma
Mt. Gosainthan
Mt. Nyenchentanglha
Mt. Tsangpo

BEYOND

THE HIGH HIMALAYAS

BOOKS BY WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS

Beyond the High Himalayas

Strange Lands and Friendly People

Of Men and Mountains

Beyond the High Himalayas

By WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS

Doubleday & Company, Inc, Garden City, N.Y., 1952

FOREWORD

When I flew out of New York City in 1951 for Karachi, Kabul, and Delhi, I planned to write a book about the famous mountains that stretch across northern India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. The Himalayas, the Karakorams, and the Hindu Kush—all geologically one—had long fascinated me. The British expeditions to Everest, the American assault on K2 had excited me. I had read all the Himalayan literature on those and on other alpine expeditions in this region. Frank Smythe's book, *The Valley of Flowers*, finally decided me. I would explore the Himalayas on foot.

One who first goes to the Himalayas should talk with someone who has been there; and as he talks he should watch the eyes of his adviser for the great excitement his questions cause.

There will be memories of the moon turning glaciers to gold. Pieces of old Tibetan love songs will come floating down a canyon already drenched with loneliness. Drums once more will beat in such a frenzied rhythm that one will want to cast off convention, join the natives, and jump and whirl in a mad exciting dance. Miles of snow-capped peaks will suddenly appear far above the earth and disappear as quickly and as magically as they came. There will be the sweet voice of a lovely girl singing of love under a poplar tree in a tiny garden of a village. Once more the wind will whine off 25,000-foot peaks, carrying the sting of sleet on its wings. The shouts, the whistles, the cries of the muleteers, and the medley of dozens of bells of the mule train will fill the place. Acres of poppies once more will stretch as far as the eye can see. Deep-throated horns, blown by scraggy lamas, will echo and re-echo off canyon walls. Miles of cinquefoil will cover a mountain range with yellow and reds; and acres of geraniums will give a bluish cast to stands of fir and pine. And perhaps loveliest of all will be the sound of a flute—a flute blown by a lonely shepherd high on the crags, a flute whose music sounds like falling water.

I could not find in the United States the person who had the firsthand information about Himalayan treks which I needed. So I visited India in 1950 on a preliminary and exploratory trip. I arrived at Ranikhet late at night in a pouring rain. Ranikhet, an old British hill station presently garrisoned by the Indian Army, sits on a 6,000-foot

ridge facing the Garhwahl Himalayas across an 80-mile valley. I despaired of seeing the Snows in the few days I had reserved for Ranikhet, as the monsoon lay heavily over the ranges. But my coming was a good omen. There had been no sun for thirty days. At dawn of the morning following my arrival the sky was clear. The Himalayas—200 miles of them—lay exposed in front of me. Nanda Devi, Trisul, and other giant peaks punched the sky at points where mountains are not supposed to be. Their grandeur left me without words. In the mornings I would be up before dawn waiting for the sun to hit the glaciers. One morning I saw a finger of light no bigger than a pencil race like mad across the 200-mile stretch of solid ice and snow. That night I saw the sun slowly form a band of light across the same 200-mile length of glaciers—a band that turned from gold to red to gray to purple and then, as the sun set, jumped off into space and disappeared, as if waved away by some magic wand.

These were startling experiences that whetted my appetite. I laid my plans carefully. I canvassed the problem of porters, of food, and of equipment at Ranikhet. I planned to return in June 1951, enter the Himalayas through Almora, and take a long trek to Kailas, a historic place of pilgrimage in Tibet.

These well-laid plans were changed by events. By the spring of 1951 Tibet was no longer hospitable to Americans. So I moved my operations westward and designed a trek from Manali to Leh. Even so the venture remained what it had been from the beginning—a mountain expedition. And the book was to be about glaciers, high passes, blue poppies, rhododendrons, snow leopards, geology, Himalayan sunsets, and the folk songs of the trails. It was in other words to be a mountain book.

But I planned in ignorance. Before I got where I was going I realized that I was traveling Central Asia as witness to one of the most dramatic and important political stories of the century. The mountains remained, serving as the backdrop for the story; but the story was new, exciting, and disturbing, with precious little relevance to the lofty peaks which looked down on the events that shaped the destiny of Central Asia.

Central Asia is mostly in Russia and Tibet. But the northern stretch of India and the outposts of Pakistan that nestle in the Karakorams are also Central Asia. They are *one world;* the Communist regimes that lie to the north are a *second world;* we of the West, propelled by events so fast that we have little time to learn what we have done yesterday or where we are going tomorrow, are still a *third world*. It is the interplay of these *three worlds* that furnishes the underlying theme of the book.

I went first to Afghanistan, where I visited Kabul, the capital, and then turned north and crossed the Hindu Kush by the Shibar Pass,

dropping down to the ancient Buddhist town of Bamian. Then I retraced my steps to Kabul and returned to West Pakistan over the Khyber Pass, stopping at the city of Peshawar. From there I went north to the Kingdom of Swat for a brief visit. Then I flew the western stretch of the Himalayas to Gilgit and took some trips into the area that stretches along the Sinkiang border. These journeys preceded the long trek which I made on foot and by pack train from Manali to Leh in the Indian Himalayas. Yet I have placed the account of the Himalayan crossing first, because that arrangement facilitates the telling of the political part of these chronicles.

The political story cannot be understood unless the country, the people, their institutions and problems, their worries and superstitions are known. One must walk or ride vast and empty regions to know these things about Central Asia. This is not easily done. It requires great physical exertion and adventure into high and distant places. This volume undertakes to present the grass-root environment of the area. I searched out villagers and goatherds, wandering Tibetans, the men and women who bring the sheep trains down from Sinkiang and Tibet, lamas, and local officials. I tried to learn from them the political, economic, and social scheme of things in this area. I ate and drank and slept with them. I tried to lose myself in their environment in order to see the world through their eyes, to find the measure of their loyalties, to discover their aspirations, and to come to know their worries and fears. When the rigors of the region and the struggles of the people are known, the appalling nature of some of the major problems facing the West will be better understood.

An American mountain book on the Himalayas is yet to be done. If this volume inspires or encourages that project, there will be reward enough. For the Himalayas are the superlative among all peaks—the place which future generations of Americans should make a playground and a laboratory. There are untold peaks to climb, fauna and flora to discover, geological formations to explore, and high trails to traverse. The immediate rewards are exciting and untold; and there are rewards beyond the mountains themselves. One who goes to the Himalayas must first traverse the plains of Pakistan and India. He cannot do that without coming into touch with problems and people that will reach his heart and his mind. If he goes with humility and is patient, he will return with understanding; and understanding of Asia by the West will be the greatest reward which any Himalayan trek can offer.

WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS

Washington, D.C., June 12, 1952

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Edith Allen, Mercedes H. Davidson, Gladys Giese, and Helen Linde of Washington, D.C., for carrying the burden of the mechanics of the book; to Dr. William A. Dayton and Miss Doris W. Hayes of Washington, D.C., for help on the botanical material; to Jenö Takacs of the School of Music, University of Cincinnati for making the musical transcriptions from my tape recordings; to John Clark of St. Charles, Illinois, Aftab A. Khan of Rawalpindi, Mohammed A. Khan of Gilgit, Syed Hissam Shah of Murree for assistance on the problems of Pakistan; to Faqir M. Mohmand and Abdul Hakim Tabibi of Kabul for help on the Afghanistan material; to the Reverend Norman Driver and General R. V. Karve of Leh for advice on the problems of Ladakh; to Professor Allan B. Cole of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and Professor Lawrence Krader of the Harvard University Russian Research Center for insight into some of the problems of Central Asia; for Colin Rosser of New Delhi for his researches into the religious customs of the Kulu people; and finally to R. N. Rahul of Delhi—my friendly companion and patient interpreter—whose insight into the problems of India, Lahul, Ladakh, Tibet, and Sinkiang greatly enriched my journey.

During the Himalayan trek I pressed several hundred botanical specimens. They will be deposited in the Smithsonian when their classification is completed. With the help of Ram Lai Shah of Ranikhet I also collected the seeds of some eighty species of Himalayan wild flowers. The plants grown from these seeds are being propagated at the Finch Arboretum, Spokane, Washington, and at the U.S. Forest Service Experimental Station, Wind River, Washington.

WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS

Contents

FOREWORD
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
ILLUSTRATIONS

PART 1 TRANS-HIMALAYA

Chapter I. My Romantic Bus Driver
Chapter II. We Start With Prayer
Chapter III. Come At Nighttime
Chapter IV. I Build a Bridge
Chapter V. A Lady's Proposal
Chapter VI. A Court In Lahul
Chapter VII. My Musical Mule Train
Chapter VIII. My Magical Hat
Chapter IX. Sheep Are The Goods Trains
Chapter X. Nehru's Horsemen
Chapter XI. Horses, Mules, Yaks, and Moti
Chapter XII. The Spirit of Satan
Chapter XIII. Pass Poison
Chapter XIV. My Medical Practice
Chapter XV. Hemis Monastery
Chapter XVI. An Incarnate Lama
Chapter XVII. Om Mani Padme Hoom
Chapter XVIII. How Many Husbands?
Chapter XIX. The Church As Landlord
Chapter XX. Communism vs. Buddhism
Chapter XXI. Ju Le, Ju Le

PART 2 THE GREAT NORTHWEST

Chapter I. "On The Hilt And The Haft
Chapter II. At Rest On The Russian Border
Chapter III. A Lizard And A King
Chapter IV. Tumbling Down The Kaghah
Chapter V. The Music Of Pounding Feet
Chapter VI. Russia, Sinkiang, And Feudalism
Chapter VII. An American Revolution

Appendix 1 My Itinerary July-August, 1951

Appendix 2 Trek Elevations Of Main Points
Appendix 3 Hints For Himalayan Travel
Appendix 4 Music Transcriptions

ILLUSTRATIONS

KODACHROMES by *WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS*

- The ladies at Manali who sang for me.
- The Chandra River below Koksar
- Two Lahuli women wo wanted us to stay all night
- Villagers at Koksar carrying a log for my bridge
- Sun Lake at Baralacha Pass
- The village of Kyelang in Lahul
- Ram Chand and an obos at Gongrechen Pass
- The Indus River at Upshi
- Hemis Monastery at Ladakh
- Devil dancers at Hemis Monastery
- Street scene in Leh, Ladakh
- Jigmet, headman at Upshi, and his daughter
- Children of Bamian, Afghanistan
- Buddhist Cliff near Bamian, Afghanistan
- The valley of Swat near Saidu
- The Gilgit River

BLACK & WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS by *WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS*

- R. N. Rahul, my interpreter
- The Dak bungalow at Koti
- My cook, Budh Ram, and three porters
- Rothang Pass
- The women of Gya, who sang for me
- The orchestra at Gya
- The outdoor court
- Moti, the least worthy mule in Lahul or Ladakh
- The trail below Chakchu
- Himalayan Range at Chakchu
- My Ladakhi patient at Chakchu
- A mani wall outside Leh
- The Incarnate Lama at Hemis Monastery
- Prayer cylinders in the wall at Hemis
- Lama dancers at Hemis

- Bakula, head of the Buddhist Yellow Sect, Ladakh
- Ladakh women and children, Leh
- Empty castle of the King of Ladakh
- Zila and her daps
- The Khyber Pass in West Pakistan
- The Mir of Hunza and the Mir of Nagir
- Ancient Buddhist Cliff in Bamian, Afghanistan
- Mohammed Hossein, the flute player
- Naltar in West Pakistan
- An orchestra in Gilgit
- The canyon of the Khaghan River

PART 1

TRANS-HIMALAYA

Chapter 1
My Romantic Bus Driver

My Himalayan trek was off to a bad start. Nothing went well. It was as if the fates were stirring trouble. To begin with, my colored movie films, which had preceded me to India by several weeks, went astray. I could not afford to replace them by new purchases in Delhi. I could not delay in Delhi in view of the hard, close schedule I was on. Yet a trek without movie film would be only half a trek.

I lunched with Nehru the day I left Delhi (July 24, 1951) and told him of my plight. He asked me not to worry; he would see that the film caught up with me. Yet I felt empty-handed as I left.

Trouble also dogged my baggage. When all the equipment for the trek had been sorted and assembled there were thirty-three pieces—tents, sleeping bags, air mattresses, food, clothing, medicines. Most of it was in duffel bags; some of it—the five gallons of kerosene, for example—was in wooden cases; other pieces—the two-burner Primus kerosene stove and the canned goods—were in cardboard cartons. I sweated profusely as I unpacked and repacked in the sweltering July heat of Delhi. Finally the packages were ready, and the swarm of silent dark-skinned, barefooted porters climbed the stairs to my second-story suite at the Cecil Hotel and quietly took my baggage and melted away in the darkness. A short, wiry foreman who showed prominent teeth when he smiled was in charge of them. He was pleasant and affable, bowing low and continuously giving me the gracious Hindu greeting—the palms of the hands pressed together, the fingers pointing up. "Do not worry, Sahib," he kept saying in broken English. "I will see that all the baggage is on the train." An hour later I was in the steaming Delhi railroad station looking for the 9:35 P.M. train of the East Punjab Railway Company for Pathankot. The station was packed as tightly as New York's Grand Central at rush hours. Soldiers, peddlers, women with babies in their arms, old men blind and withered, husky children with shouts on their lips—all pouring endlessly through dimly lighted corridors. Strange tongues filled the place with echoes—farewells and greetings, the plaintive pleas of blind beggars, the sharp commands of officers, the shouts of hawkers selling food, tea, *Look* and *Life* magazines, and mangoes. Above it all was the clanging of bells and the shrill whistles of locomotives.

The foreman of my porters was waiting at my compartment door.

He bowed low, giving me once more the Hindu greeting and saying, this time quite unctuously, “Sahib, all the baggage is on the train.” I looked in my compartment and saw only a few parcels. He spoke up quickly and said, “The rest, Sahib, is forward in a locked car. There are thieves, Sahib, and I did not want them to steal from you.” With that I gave him a tip worth several days’ wages in India. When the train pulled out of the station and by its motion stirred the hot, damp night air into a semblance of coolness, I stretched out on the lower berth, content that the baggage, Rahul, and I were at last together and on our way.

Rahul was happy too. He was only in his early thirties and already an experienced mountaineer. A devout Buddhist, a linguist, a student of Central Asia, an authority on Tibet, a light-hearted, happy man with warm eyes and a hearty laugh—he was my companion and interpreter. The train had barely gotten under way when he shouted, “Out of the plains and into the mountains. Now our spirits will be free.”

The feeling of contentment grew as the sun rose over the plains of southern Punjab the next morning. The train was rattling across country as flat as northern Indiana and dotted with drab mud houses with peaked roofs. Most of them were clustered together in small villages; and on all the walls was cow dung drying for fuel. The morning air was cool. Men were already plowing—most of them with clumsy wooden plows pulled by bullocks, one with a small tractor. Strange trees lined the roadways and stood in lonely clumps in far-off fields—banyans, peepul, sesam, neem. There were orchards of mangoes, strange to the eye; and orchards of pears as familiar as any back home. The fields, which seemed to be filled with hundreds of slender, white, heron-like birds called the bugalo, were rich in sugar cane, rice, and grain. The monsoon, which was over a month late, had left vast areas of India parched and dry. But it had struck southern Punjab, filling dirty water holes where naked boys splashed.

And so the ground was freshly green to the horizon. The sky was clear; but far to the north was a huge bank of dark clouds concealing, I imagined, the lofty peaks and passes of the Himalayas where we were headed. I did not sense the near disaster that lay in wait for me. I had no inkling of the skein of troubles yet to be untangled.

We ate our breakfast along the way. At one station we bought mangoes—the fruit the native doctors of India say turns to blood and therefore is healthful. At another we bought peaches. At still another we bought *poori*—a type of pancake fried in hot grease and eaten with a mixture of potatoes and gram. Farther on we topped it off with tea. Thus a delicious breakfast was served in courses by platform hawkers at widely separated stations.

It was noon and the heat was mounting to 100 degrees when we reached Pathankot. After all passengers had disembarked and the train had been unloaded, none of my baggage was to be found. I could hear my head porter in Delhi saying, “There are thieves, Sahib,” and once more in my imagination I could see him smiling and bowing to me.

Telegraphic dispatches eventually brought word that my friend had put the baggage on the train all right—but it happened to be a different train, a train that would arrive six hours later. And so it was that we did not leave Pathankot until late afternoon.

For 235 rupees I chartered a bus from the Kulu Transport Company to take us two hundred miles to Manali in Punjab, the end of the road and the beginning of the trail. The driver was Gillu, a small, slightly bald, sharp-beaked man about forty years old. He had a helper—a young man in his twenties who wore gold earrings and sat in the rear and whose sole job was to crank the engine when we stopped.

Gillu drove like a demon. The bus had feeble, squeaky brakes and a weak, wheezy horn. Gillu preferred the horn. We bounced crazily along the one-lane strip of asphalt that stretches north to the Kulu Valley and Manali. We roared under avenues of mangoes whose branches touched overhead, brushed carelessly by bullock carts and farmers, scattered chickens and children, and stopped only for the cow—sacred to Gillu, a Hindu. We climbed to low basins where sheep grazed small pockets in low-lying hills that reminded me of western Massachusetts. Corn was waist-high; bamboo was lush; men and women were in rice fields deep in mud until dark. For this was Asarh, the month for the transplanting. There were hedges formed from a cactus; there were miles of pepper trees, bananas, and ancient banyans with roots hanging from their boughs. And once in a while a monkey would dash up a tree at our coming. When we reached three thousand feet I saw the first mark of the hills—the longleaf pine, the chir, growing in solitary fashion like our own ponderosa.

It was after eight o’clock when we reached Palampur, located in a beautiful basin filled with tea gardens and fir trees. Here we rented a government bungalow that had two rooms, barren except for cots and portable toilet facilities. I cooked supper over heat tabs. Afterward Rahul and I sat on the porch sipping tea. The stars were out and a cool breeze came up the valley. Gillu, who had disappeared for an hour or more, suddenly turned up and demanded that we start at five o’clock in the morning. His proposal suited me. I had planned to reach Manali this night, spend a day there, and be off the following morning—the day when the horses had been arranged for. I could keep that schedule if we got an early start, for Manali was only 125 miles distant.

I did not, however, reckon with Gillu’s sex life. I found out about it and about Gillu as the bus the next morning climbed the steep,

winding road above Palampur. I sat next to him and we soon got on friendly terms. I learned that he had a wife and ten children. I expressed pleasure at the large family and added that it takes a lot of children to keep a man young. Gillu looked at me sadly and said, “Not on one hundred rupees [about twenty dollars] a month.”

There was a long silence as I brooded over the prospect of feeding twelve mouths on twenty dollars a month. Finally I asked Gillu if he had always been as poor. He told me he had. I asked why he had such a large family if he had always been so poor. My question seemed to spur Gillu on to even more frenzied driving. We now roared along the narrow asphalt strip, turned corners with much screeching of tires, and whirled dangerously close to the edges of cliffs that dropped off hundreds of feet. I at once regretted I had tampered with Gillu’s subconscious. It seemed that I had stirred in him some kind of monster.

We were now in an area where stones had been piled to make fences like those in New England. There were terraced rice paddies for miles and miles, watered from canals leading out of the Beas River that thundered below us. Higher on the canyon walls were miles of tea bushes sitting prettily in terraces that stretched as far as the eye could see. But the beauty of the scene was largely lost to me. I found myself pressing on the floor boards when Gillu should have been using his brakes. I noticed that my hands were gripping the seat. Once I ducked when the bus screeched around a corner and barely missed another truck that also occupied the middle of the road. I stole a furtive look at Gillu. He seemed wholly unconcerned, as if flirting with death were his steady occupation. Finally, on an open stretch of the road, he replied to my question about his large family.

“Sahib,” he said, “you go home at night and what happens? You have magazines and books and you can read. You have a radio and you can listen. Maybe, Sahib, you have—what is it, television?—and you can see. I go home and what do I have? Nothing but my wife. Night after night after night. Only my wife. That’s why I have ten children.”

The telling of it did not seem to relieve the strain. It had the opposite effect. Gillu stepped on the gas, and we went with the wind. A beautiful girl who was herding some goats across the road barely escaped with her life. The goats were saved by a miracle. We roared up a hill, careened around a corner, and came to a screeching stop in a village.

Gillu, as spry as a bird, hopped out and disappeared. He was gone a long time. Impatiently I paced the village street. Women were coming in from the countryside carrying poles over their shoulders on each end of which were copper buckets shaped like bowls, the tops of the

buckets being stuffed with grass. Some buckets held several quarts, others a few pints. The larger ones held milk, the smaller ones butter. The women who carried these products were distinguished not only by rings in their ears and noses but by flat medallions attached to their nostrils and so large that they hung down over their upper lips. These were the badge of the milkmaid in the hill country.

As we waited for Gillu to return, Rahul and I talked about the caste system of India and its invention by Manu (who lived long before Christ) as a political instrument of the Brahmins to keep control of the masses. Manu justified the caste system by reference to the human body: (1) the head held the brains, i.e., the Brahmins; (2) the arms and the shoulders had the strength, i.e., the military; (3) the midriff or the stomach was the sustaining part, i.e., the merchants; (4) the legs and feet did the heavy work; i.e., the laborers. Below the four castes were the Untouchables, who were considered fit only for servile tasks. But I quickly tired of this research into the caste system of India. I was headed for the mountains and I wanted to be on my way. Where was Gillu?

After a while I found him. He had had breakfast with friends and now was being shaved in the village barbershop. He grinned at me sheepishly through a white cloud of lather. By the time I got him into the bus an hour had passed and I spoke to him sharply, reminding him that I wanted to get to Manali by noon.

But Gillu had his own program for the day well in mind. As soon as we roared into Mandi, a former state and now a part of Himachal Praedesh (one of India's provinces), Gillu was out of the bus in a flash and gone. He was gone for a seemingly interminable time; so Rahul and I went to a tea house for a breakfast of tea, bread, and eggs. Afterward we roamed the streets, talking with the villagers. Mandi had been owned by a maharajah—lock, stock, and barrel. Then Nehru's government took over all his lands, agreed to pay him a pension for life, and sold his lands to the peasants. But I tired of my research into India's land problem. I wanted to be on my way into the Himalayas. Where was Gillu? Once again I paced the streets looking for him. Finally after two hours he returned, beaming and unconcerned, though he knew I was cross.

It was noon and we should have been in Manali by now. We turned into the one-way dirt road leading up the gorge formed by the Beas River. This gorge, narrow with steep canyon walls, runs for sixty miles. The road hangs onto the edge of the Beas, rising to high cliffs and then dropping to water level. It is strictly one-way traffic with no turnouts. The grade, curves, and cliffs made no difference to Gillu. He drove like a madman. I hung on desperately as we bounced from hole to hole in the miserable road. All the while I was probing for a clue to

Gillu's behavior. Finally I followed a flash of intuition.

"Have you a girl in Mandi, Gillu? Is that why you stopped for a shave before we reached Mandi?"

Gillu grinned as he ran his tongue over his lips.

There was a long silence. Not a word was said. We finally came out of the gorge and entered the Kulu Valley, a mile wide and perhaps forty miles long. It was called Kiu-lu-to by Hsuan Tsang, the famous Buddhist pilgrim who visited it in A.D. 635. It is a rich and pleasant valley with an annual average rainfall of about forty inches. It has the climate of New England in the summer and a winter so mild that in the fall birds and people alike come down from the high country in the north to settle there. Now the Kulu Valley was baking under a hot July sun. It is normally green in the summer; but the monsoon had been late this year and the fields were mostly parched and dry. Terraces of pears and apples ran along the hillsides. There were corn and rice in the valley. Huge mulberry trees lined the road. We shortly pulled up in a cloud of dust near a bazaar in the village of Kulu. Once more Gillu was gone as soon as the motor stopped.

"Surely not again," I said to myself. I roamed through all the shops of Kulu. In one I found a bottled orange drink and tried to quench my thirst with it; but it was tepid. I took pictures and talked with villagers; and I raged inwardly at Gillu.

I went out of my way to look at the prayer flags. I had seen them all afternoon flying from houses, from bridges, from trees. There were Hindu prayers written on them; and every flutter of the flags made the writer a beneficiary of their blessings.

I examined the houses of Kulu—well-built houses made of rocks with roofs of slate or thatch. After a while I exhausted my researches among the villagers of Kulu. I followed a white-collared crow around, the scavenger that ranges the lowlands of Asia, the one I had seen by the thousands in Karachi. This lone crow finally flew to the top of a tree and started his hoarse calling, "You're ill. You're ill."

Then I turned my attention to the hoopoe, the singular bird that cannot be mistaken for any other. They were wheeling in flocks over the fields—red crests, white wings with black bars, long slightly curved bills. On the wing they looked to me like huge butterflies. But I tired even of hoopoes. Where was Gillu?

The sun was low when he returned, walking jauntily and smiling. This time there was the smell of *lugri* on him—the local Kulu wine made from rice. There was also happiness in his heart, for I heard him softly whistling as we roared along the last twenty miles of our journey. After we had left the village I turned to him and said, "Are the Kulu girls better than the girls from Mandi?"

Gillu gave me a twinkling side glance.

It was dark when we arrived at Manali. We had taken fourteen hours to come the 125 miles from Palampur. Part of the delay was due to mechanical difficulties with the ancient bus. There were repairs to make and we had to stop a few times to let the engine cool. But the primary causative factor for our delay, as we say in the law, was Gillu's romances. I whispered to him, "Woman, thy name is trouble," and left him grinning in a dark forest near the small hotel where I was to stay.

On the first of March I had written to Manali, asking that horses be reserved for me beginning the last week in July. The man who was to make the arrangements had replied that he would take care of the matter. He took pains in his correspondence to say that he would not disclose my identity for fear the price would go up; he would handle the transaction carefully; he would have eleven good horses for me, horses that could travel the 240 miles to Leh.

Rahul and I found this man shortly after we reached Manali and it was in his hotel that we took rooms. He was a tall, heavy-set man—a half-breed who had acquired his big head, heavy jowls, broad shoulders, and his British accent from his father. He was now sixty or better. His stomach hung conspicuously over his belt and he walked with a limp on legs that were frail. After introducing myself, I asked about the horses. "They will be here in the morning," he said.

So Rahul and I were up at dawn reassembling our baggage for the pack train. By breakfast, by midmorning, by noon, the horses had not come.

"They will be here this afternoon," said the half-breed, "but you better plan to start in the morning."

The horses had not arrived by dark. "They will be here in the morning," he assured me.

By midmorning of the following day they had not come. So Rahul went to the village to see if he could get other horses. What he learned was depressing. There were dozens of horses and mules in Manali, but none was for hire. Manali was the end of the caravan route from Leh. Many horses and mules—seventy, in fact—had just come in over the high passes with merchandise from Tibet. But they had long been contracted for by merchants. No horses would be available for weeks.

We confronted our hotel man with the news. He flushed slightly as he said, "Your horses will be here in a day or so. I can't imagine what has happened to them." He went on to say that he was sure we would enjoy Manali; there were ridges to explore and peaks to climb. He pointed to a 17,000-foot peak whose nose I could see pushing through the clouds and explained what a fine adventure it held. His strategy was now clear. He wanted us as guests in his hotel and was using the hope of the arrival of horses as bait.

Rahul and I had a conference. Should we go to Leh on foot? How high are the passes between Manali and Leh? From 13,200 feet high to nearly 18,000 feet. It was 240 miles. It would take twenty days of walking. There were 900 pounds of baggage. That would mean eighteen or twenty porters.

Early in 1951 Rahul had been on a winter expedition in the Himalayas and had almost lost his toes from frostbite. Could his feet stand the pounding from Manali to Leh? I had lost half a lung in an accident with a horse. Could I endure 18,000 feet?

It did not take long for us to decide.

"We'll call it the trek of the cripples," I said as Rahul and I with songs in our hearts headed for the village of Manali to recruit our porters.

We found our porters and on our return to the hotel walked along in silence, skirting orchards of cherries, prunes, plums, peaches, quince, and apples built on terraces running up the mountain's side. In a few minutes Rahul turned to me, lights dancing in his eyes. "Now that we will be on the trail tomorrow I feel excited. As excited as—as excited as——"

I broke in to add, "As excited as Gillu."

"Exactly," he shouted. "As excited as Gillu when he left us for his girl in Mandi."

And an old, wizened lady with a gold ring in her nose and a basket on her back—a long woven basket, wide at the top, pointed at the bottom, and full of grass—stopped to look at us, questioning our sanity, as we went by arm in arm, roaring with laughter.

Chapter 2
We Start With Prayer

We hired our porters, our cook, and the cook's assistant Friday evening, July 27, 1951, and they were to report at our hotel by seven o'clock the next morning so that we could get an early start. At seven o'clock the sky was clear, a beautiful day for a trek, I thought. But the porters had not arrived. Ten o'clock came and still there was no sign of them. There was, however, sign of rain, for low dark clouds were creeping up the Kulu Valley and blotting ridges and peaks from view. By noon, when the porters arrived, dark clouds were high over Manali.

"Why the delay?" I asked Budh Ram. Budh Ram was my cook—a man who could turn out some good dishes but who was not able to make powdered eggs any more palatable than putty. He was about twenty-one years old, tall, rangy, good-natured. He had a big Roman nose and large ears that stuck out like sails. I had hired Man Das, his younger brother, as my personal aide or bearer. Man Das, shorter than his brother, slight, and slow-moving, was about seventeen years old and immature for his age. He was a quiet, introspective lad who I later discovered was frightened of mountains and high passes. It was he who always wanted to turn back. Man Das was the easy victim of the fears and alarms that beset the trek. It was Man Das whose courage I had to sustain in the days ahead. Budh Ram was sometimes frightened; but usually he was calm. He was unperturbed at the note of impatience in my voice when I asked about the long delay in getting started. His eyes were wide with sincerity as he reverently replied, "We had to pray for rain."

The monsoon was late; and when I had visited Nehru the fields around Delhi were parched. There was concern in Nehru's eyes as we stood by a window in his residence talking of the dry, brown fields that stretched in every direction. Parched fields in India, where people have only a subsistence living, mean sunken cheeks, bloated bellies, and death. Nehru knew it; so did the villagers of Manali. They knew the ancient Kulu proverb that "the field visited by the yellow color is lost." The monsoon had not reached Kulu. The rice was safe, for it was watered by the Beas. But the corn and wheat were dying. The day the romantic Gillu drove us up from Palampur I had seen the specter of starvation most of the distance. The wheat was shriveling. The waist-

high corn was stunted; the leaves were turning yellow; the stalks drooping. The Kulu Valley that averages forty inches of rain a year, the valley that is usually lush in summer, was now burning to a crisp.

There are gods or spirits in the hill country of India who manage these affairs and who also have power to correct them when they go badly. Each locality has its own deity. The ones in the Kulu region formerly resided in Kashmir; but they forsook that country long ago on account of the wickedness of the people and came to the Kulu Valley. There are several deities in Kulu, one of the most important being Hirma.

Hirma has a four-day fair held in her honor during the month of May. But the year around Hirma's help is invoked in case of trouble. Men take an oath on Hirma, the people believing that no one would dare swear falsely before her. Her suppliants propitiate her by driving nails into deodar trees; and as a result there are deodar trees at Manali heavy with iron. A whole village, if plagued with sickness or misfortune, will join in an expiatory ceremony. A man goes from house to house collecting in a basket the odds and ends of food, pieces of clothing, fragments of hair, pieces of fingernails or toenails, small articles of junk. Then an unbroken thread is stretched between four posts driven at the four corners of the village, whereupon all the villagers walk its circumference. The man with the basket dumps the contents into the river, and a sheep or fowl is killed, half of the sacrifice going to the man with the basket. Thus is bad luck banished.

It was to Hirma that the villagers turned for help the day we left Manali, for Hirma is thought to have special power over rain. Hirma has a fairly elaborate ecclesiastical organization. The manager is the *kardar;* there are priests (*pujaris*) who officiate at the services; and there is a group of menial servants. The goddess has musicians chosen by the *kardar* (invariably from the untouchable castes), who furnish the music for all the religious occasions. These offices are hereditary. There is also an oracle or *chela*. Any male may become a *chela*. His qualifications usually become apparent when the image of Hirma is being carried in a procession. At that time a man may suddenly become possessed by the goddess—that is to say, he suddenly begins to shake violently, to tremble all over, to become delirious. He may shake so hard that he loses his hat. He is, to use an expression common to us, carried away. In that event he is brought before the priest and made a *chela*. He then becomes a mouthpiece of the goddess. He speaks for her; and he also is the agent through whom contact with the goddess can be made, for he has been "selected" for the service by the goddess. Thereafter he may not smoke or cut his hair. He must attend all ceremonies in her honor.

A *chela*, when "selected," is given instruction for his office by the

kardar. He is shown how to sit at ceremonies, how to act in a procession, how to carry the implements of his office (a hand bell and a bowl of ashes), how to do the *chela* dance.

A god or goddess may in theory have any number of *chelas*. In practice the number is controlled by the financial resources of the deity. Hirma has two *chelas*—an old man who is a smith (an unclean caste), and a young man who is of the high Rajput or warrior caste. Both are from Manali.

These members of Hirma's organization are supported by Hirma. She is amply endowed with land which is under the management of the *kardar*. The land is allotted to the priests and to the *chelas*. The musicians are paid for their services. And probably the greater part of Hirma's annual income goes to provide the feasts for the villagers.

The *chela* often goes into a trance, and when he does the villagers sit around and listen to what he says, hoping to find in his mutterings some clue to their own personal difficulties. At such times, no one questions him. But when trouble brews or bad luck happens, the villagers approach him for advice. Should the bridge over the Beas that has just been washed out be repaired? Should the aid of the deity be sought to drive the plague of influenza from Manali? Should the power of the goddess be invoked to produce rain?

When the crops of Kulu were first beginning to droop for lack of rain, the villagers of Manali asked the elder *chela* if Hirma's intervention should be sought. The *chela* said no, the time was not propitious. But the morning of the day my porters were supposed to report for duty, the *chela* (perhaps with an eye on the black clouds rolling up from the south) said this would be the day to pray for rain.

And so the villagers assembled for a procession. Hirma was represented by a silver mask erected on a palanquin carried sedan-fashion on the shoulders of men. The *chelas* were up front, doing the hop-and-jump ceremonial dance. The procession wound its way through the streets, followed by an orchestra of drums, horns, and flutes. The bearers of the chair danced back and forth, pretending to be driven here and there by the will of the deity. The destination of the procession was the temple of Hirma located in the forest of Dhungri about one mile from Manali. It is an immense pagoda-like structure, set in a dark grove of deodars that are centuries old. Inside the temple is one large room, bare, unadorned, and gloomy. It was here the villagers carried the figure of the goddess; it was here they prayed; it was here that rites were performed.

When Budh Ram, who had described the ceremony to me, finished his account, I asked, "Is it going to rain?"

"It always rains when we pray," he answered, his eyes once more wide with sincerity.

I did not take his prediction too seriously. If it rained, I had a good water-repellent jacket that would probably be adequate. I was not worried about the contents of the packs, for they were in new waterproof plastic bags that I had found in New York City. Let it rain, I thought, not realizing how close to destruction rain in the Himalayas can take a man.

The porters were now quarreling over the baggage. Those who had come early picked the lightest pieces; the heaviest were left for the late-comers. While they were resolving their dispute I walked through a thick stand of fir, spruce, blue pine, and deodars to the far side of the valley, where I waited at a concrete bridge over the Beas, resolved to observe one cardinal principle for Himalayan travel—to keep the porters up front. Those who had forgotten to do so sometimes spent the night without food or shelter. For porters, when they think they have done their daily stint, often make camp then and there.

In the winter the Beas, which is the fifth in magnitude of India's rivers, is a clear, purling stream. Today it was swollen, black, and angry. Now neither man nor beast could ford it. I could hear big rocks grinding under the pressure of the snow water pouring off the high ridges. In the lower reaches of the Beas, far to the south, are crocodiles. In the stretch through the Kulu Valley are the famed mahsir, the fish that is reminiscent of our salmon and that grows to over sixty pounds, as well as brown trout and rainbow trout planted by the British. Big black crows flapped lazily overhead. A water ouzel teetered on a large granite rock, catching the spray of the river. Blue rock pigeons streaked downstream as if possessed.

Then came the porters—some barefooted, some with handmade grass sandals, all of them wearing coarse, short trousers, brown skullcaps trimmed with red, and heavy brown wool coats coming to the knees. They were smiling, all except the last man, on whose shoulders fate had placed the heavy carton of canned goods. His face was dark with anger. Single-file, they turned north at the bridge toward Rothang Pass and settled down to about two miles an hour.

The trail follows the river for three miles or so before it climbs sharply. In this stretch—in fact, throughout all of the eight miles between Manali and Koti—the valley has the grandeur of a vast, open park. There are horse chestnuts, deodars, maples, elms, poplars, mulberries, and walnuts—all sown with an uneven hand among scatterings of fir and spruce. There is an abundance of wild currants, barberries, red raspberries, and gooseberries. One finds here the madder from whose roots the natives obtain a brown dye. The canyon walls, rising six, eight, ten thousand feet, are made up of layers of slate whose sides are covered with moss and lichens and whose top is capped with granite. Cascades of pure water tumble in white spray off

dizzy cliffs. Hundreds of springs send trickles of water dripping over rock and oozing through the thick sod of upland grass. The elevation is so low for the latitude (Manali 6,400 feet, Koti 8,100 feet) that by late July most of the wild flowers are gone. But the day I passed this way there were fresh violets on mossy banks and golden streaks of mimulus along the small creeks that fed the Beas.

We had gone barely a mile toward Koti when it started to rain. Fog rolled quickly over the valley, obliterating the peaks, ridges, and canyon walls. The valley lay deep in mist. The rain was a soft, pleasant rain that touched the face gently—as warm and as permeating as a woman's love. Soon we reached a clump of huge chestnut trees that had long been monarchs of the valley. There my porters stopped and dropped their packs. They squatted, sitting on their shanks, struck fire with flint, and passed a conical-shaped pipe around the circle. The stem of this pipe was barely an inch long, and to cool the smoke they stuffed the stem with green grass. As they smoked they laughed and joked—a happy, carefree lot. I asked Budh Ram why they were so happy.

"You see," he said, "the rain came. Now we won't starve. The goddess has saved our lives."

Their chattering continued as the pipe went from hand to hand. After a few minutes I asked Budh Ram, "What are they talking about now?" He was at first embarrassed to answer.

Then with much giggling and with several side remarks to the porters he managed to say, "They want to know why you are so crazy to come all the way from America and go up on the high passes of the Himalayas where the evil spirits live."

They were all watching my face for my response; and when I smiled, they all broke forth with friendly but uproarious laughter.

My porters stopped every mile for three miles and performed the same ritual of smoking. Then the rain began in earnest; and as it pounded down the fog lifted. Now I could see terraces along the canyon walls—terraces where houses clustered and where hay, corn, potatoes, beans, and hemp for hashish were grown. The houses were two-storied affairs built mostly of rock with roofs of slate. Downstairs were the sheep and cattle. One got upstairs to the big room where the family lived by climbing a notched log that lay against a balcony which circled the house.

By now the slate roofs were running streams of water. The volume of the rain was mounting. The trail took a long spiral turn, catching an easy grade to a high meadow several hundred feet above us. My porters—as is the custom among Himalayans—forsook the trail, climbed steeply across a short cut, and in a few minutes were a half mile or more ahead of me. I kept to the trail, passed the village of

Koti, which has a precarious perch on the canyon wall, and shortly came to a huge cliff that hugged the trail. This cliff had been hollowed out at its base by centuries of weather so that it offered shelter for dozens of men. Here I found my porters huddled, smoking the communal pipe.

Since I was getting wet and chilled, I entrusted the porters to Rahul and pushed on to our first station, a dak bungalow about a mile distant, one of many resthouses built years ago by the British for the convenience of officials who traveled these trails. I had gone but a quarter of the way when the storm broke.

The storm, whose moisture had condensed over the Indian Ocean, was traveling north. As it swept in from the ocean it had licked the Punjab plains with a wet tongue. It touched the foot-hills below Kulu and then was sucked skyward by some tremendous updraft of wind. Black clouds, heavy with water, rose and rose, swooping up canyons, curling over ten- and fifteen-thousand-foot ridges, and swirling upward with the velocity of a hurricane until they were broken against peaks that rose twenty-five and twenty-six thousand feet into the sky. Then they reversed themselves, whistling down on the wings of a downdraft that had the force of a tornado.

The storm that struck came from the north off Rothang Pass. It came with a fury I had never known. July sees heavy storms along our Atlantic coast. I have seen torrential downpours in New York City, storms that dropped tons of water in a few minutes, storms that were brightly illuminated by lightning and marked by thundering echoes in Wall Street's canyons. But the worst of those storms was minor to the one that now broke over Koti. Rain came in such a torrent that I could see only a few yards. In a flash buckets of water dropped on me. In a matter of seconds I was soaked through, my shoes full of water. Lightning bounced crazily on all sides and thunder rolled endlessly with earsplitting claps. The canyon at this point was not a half-mile wide, and the echoes filled the narrow place with a roar.

The wind picked up in velocity. It was a harsh, cruel wind, chilled by glaciers high above me. It came with such force that I had to lean into it to keep my balance. The wind and rain made the trail treacherous, though it was wide enough for mule trains to pass. Torrents of water came with a roar from the canyon walls, formed new streams that were not visible a moment earlier, and dug harsh gullies into the mountainside in their mad rush to the Beas. The soil in this region is a clayish, micaceous type, treacherous when wet. That is why Himalayan storms often send avalanches of hundreds of thousands of tons of earth into the valleys, blotting out villages, damming up great rivers, and isolating for weeks great regions of the back country. And so, in spite of the roominess of the trail, there were

times when I almost slipped over the edge of cliffs that hugged the edge of the path.

In perhaps fifteen minutes the downpour abated, so that I could see my route and the canyon walls that had been obliterated from view. But the respite was only temporary. In a few moments the storm became truly vicious. The driving rain turned to stinging sleet and hail. It hit my hands and face with a lash. The wind increased to near-hurricane velocity. The lightning flashed with renewed power. The thunderclaps were so frequent they set up a continuous, deafening roar.

I crossed a rickety, narrow bridge over the Beas, which now was a hundred feet below me in a narrow rocky canyon. Its angry roar, as it passed through this granite trough, drowned out even the thunder. The bridge swayed under the violence of the wind. I found myself shaking from cold. My teeth chattered. The ice of the glaciers, carried on the wings of this driving rain, had at last penetrated to the marrow. It seemed to me in that dark moment that Hirma and all the other deities of the Himalayas had loosed their fury through this storm. I knew at once why villagers associated the gods with these mountains. I now knew why they prayed to these supernatural forces that swooped down on man from on high and avenged his sins. These were powers beyond human comprehension. I was to learn something of this storm's destruction when I reached Rothang Pass (about a mile higher than Koti) and saw the corpses of dozens of animals which this July blizzard had killed. Right now it seemed that my own destruction was near. My feet were heavy with water and mud. I was so chilled I could hardly move. I did not think I could long endure. My breath was short. I felt icy hands at my throat, choking me. A cruel fate overhangs this Himalayan venture, I thought, a fate that has dogged it from the start.

And then a prayer came to my lips as I bent into the wind and steeled myself for the battle of survival. In a few moments I was gasping from the effort of walking. I stopped and looked up. A swirling cloud had taken a quick upward twist and given me new hope. For there was the dak bungalow a couple hundred yards ahead of me. Could I make it? It seemed that unseen hands reached out and helped me over that last cruel stretch. There was a climb of several hundred feet in the face of a wind that carried the sting of death. My legs seemed too numb to move, my feet too heavy to lift. I reached the cabin closer to complete exhaustion than I had ever experienced on any mountain venture.

Rahul and the porters had wisely waited under the cliff until the main fury of the storm abated. By the time they arrived at the bungalow, I had a roaring fire in the fireplace. In they came, dripping

wet. They laughed and shouted as they dumped their packs and huddled near the fire. “They are happy because their prayers for rain were answered,” Budh Ram again reminded me.

Soon the room was packed with cold, wet men. The odor of their wet wool garments, the odor of their bodies quickly filled the room. The air was stuffy, even foul. But the smell had an earthy quality that was pleasant to me after the ordeal. I went from man to man, patting each one on the back and squeezing his arm, inquiring if he were sick. There was an air of friendliness about the place. The hazards of the storm had welded us together and made us one. The warmth I felt toward these hillmen of the Himalayas was, I think, reciprocated. We had won through together against the fury of the spirits.

I attended Rahul’s feet. They had stood the eight miles and the storm better than we had expected. Rahul inquired about me. I told him of the prayer of the old Negro down in Virginia who ended up with these words, “Oh, Lord, don’t let nothin’ come my way that you and me together can’t handle.” And I added, “Today I learned a wholesome respect for the Himalayas. I also learned that with God’s help we can get over the highest pass.”

Rahul nodded and said, “There’s an old Tibetan proverb, ‘If the heart be stout, a mouse can lift an elephant.’ ”

There was a deep silence. The rain was pounding in torrents on the tin roof, making a drumming sound that had a wild, weird effect. Some porters were huddled by the fire; others were stretched out on the floor.

A tremendous clap of thunder shook the bungalow. Death was abroad. But inside there was warmth, contentment, and the companionship of men bent on high adventure.

These Kulu women are pretty - dark-skinned, sharp features, brown eyes, lovely white teeth.

The Chandra River drops sixty-five feet per mile - a dark, raging stream which in the summer months is about two hundred feet wide.

Rahul was an experienced mountaineer, devout Buddhist, linguist, student of Central Asia, and authority on Tibet. A lighthearted, happy man with wrm eyes and a hearty laugh - he was my companion and interpreter.

Inside the Dak bungalow there were warmth, contentment and the companionship of men bent on high adventure.

Budh Ram was my cook. He was about 21, tall, rangy, good-natured. He had a big Roman nose and large ears that stuck out like sails. Our porters were villagers - farmers, hired hands, clerks in the bazaar at Manali.

Chapter 3
Come At Nighttime

The time spent in Manali waiting for the horses was not entirely wasted. I found musical talent among the villagers, took movies of their singing and dancing, and recorded their tunes on my portable tape recorder.

The men—some of whom later became my porters—put on the famous sword dance for me. Their dress for festive occasions is reminiscent of Greece and Albania. Some of the dancers wore shoes; most were barefoot. Their trousers were made of coarse white wool, tight-fitting around the ankles. Their coats were of the same material and hung almost to the knees. Belts worn outside the coats produced a skirt-like effect. They wore sashes of blue, yellow, and red across their shoulders. Up to this point, these dancers might well have been Greek or Albanian villagers. But their headdress was different. It was made of fancy silver quills that stood erect like the feathers on an American Indian's headdress. Others wore garlands of fresh flowers around their temples.

There were six men in the dance, two of them with long silver swords with curved blades in their right hand, the scabbards in their left. Each dancer carried a large colored handkerchief.

The orchestra had three drums and two flutes of the clarinet type. The dance was wild and energetic, the dancers whirling like dervishes, the skirts of their long coats standing straight out. Those with the swords would dash at each other madly, pirouette, and then alternate in taking healthy swings with their swords at each other's head. It seemed, indeed, that the purpose was to see how close one could come to his partner's ear without cutting it off. Then the swordsmen would part, dance gracefully around the circle in opposite directions, and come at each other again in a mad dash. The swords would change hands; new opponents would meet in the phantom battle, swinging and whirling with all their might. And so the dance progressed until each man had held a sword. It was graceful, robust, exciting. The dancers went through the dance twice for me and were exhausted at the end.

After they had rested, I asked them to sing the old folk song about Gillu and Tiki. They demurred. They said they could not sing well unless they were filled with *lugri*, the local rice wine. "Fill us up with

lugri," one man said, "and we will sing all night for you." Someone left for the village to get *lugri*. While he was gone, one of the villagers pulled a metal flute from his coat and started playing. He sat under an apricot tree, the pits of whose fruit are crushed for an oil which is used both as a lighting fluid and as a hair dressing. He played hill music—the music of Pan. Soon it became more plaintive and sad. Then the flute sounded like falling water and I was lost in the music of waterfalls coming from another world.

When I returned to the dancers, the *lugri* had arrived and the spirits of the singers were soaring. Soon they sang of Gillu and Tiki. In order to understand the song, one must know something of its background. Polygamy is permitted in the Hindu world, but there is precious little of it in the hill country. The women of Kulu have a position of independence and freedom. It is common for them on their marriage to get a contract from the bridegroom that he will not take an additional wife unless the first one becomes incapacitated for work or turns out to be barren. Unlike the position of women in Lahul and Ladakh across the Himalayas, the Kulu women do not take the whole burden of the fields on their shoulders. There is an old Kulu proverb that "farming depends on the man of the house; if he does not go to the field, the field will eat him up." Women of Kulu, of course, work in the fields; but the main responsibility is on the man.

Sexual relations in Kulu are somewhat loose, and temporary marital arrangements are not uncommon, nor is seduction of another man's wife. In case of seduction it is customary for the husband to sell all rights to his wife to the seducer for a consideration. The price may be as low as 30 rupees or as high as 900 rupees or even higher.

It is around that theme that the song of Gillu and Tike is built.

Gillu is singing. His voice is sad and plaintive. For Gillu, who seduced Tiki, the wife of another, was discovered by the husband. Gillu ended by buying Tiki for 900 rupees. He took her to his home in Manali, but in seven days she died. Gillu is full of remorse, not because Tiki died but because he did not get his money's worth. Gillu is worried that Tiki might think he never paid the 900 rupees to get her. He wants Tiki to know that he actually did pay that sum. So he brings as witness the villagers to whom he had made the disclosure at the time of the purchase. This is the song:

Tiki, I got you for 900 rupees.
I have written about that to
the people of Koti and Sonang.

I did all that for your body,
And for nothing,
Since you are now dead.

Over and over again the men sang this song. The melody is haunting. It carries the plea of anguish—not anguish of one who has lost a dear one, but anguish of one who has been robbed.

Then the women sang. These Kulu women are pretty—dark skin, sharp features, brown eyes, lovely white teeth. They wore rose, white, and blue scarves over their heads. Their skirts, which were part of a dress without sleeves, were either blue or black and white. Underneath was another dress with rather tight-fitting pantaloons. Some were barefoot; some wore sandals. They had as many as ten earrings in each ear. All had pierced noses with gold pieces set like jewels in them. Some had silver necklaces. Most wore numerous silver bracelets and a few, silver anklets. One woman was nursing a baby as she sang. The loveliest song was about Kunjva, the lover:

Red, red wrist,
Gold watch on wrist.
Kunjva, my camp is in the plain of Chamba.
Come at nighttime.

White, white your teeth,
Red lips, sweet your tongue,
White your silk handkerchief.
Kunjva, my camp is in the plains of Chamba,
*Come at nighttime.**

**See Appendix 4, song 1*

The women giggled and laughed as they sang, interrupting the song. They started over again and after several attempts made a perfect rendition. Then they added verse after verse as their hearts got into the singing.

At Koti my porters sang the songs I had heard at Manali. There was no singing the night we arrived at the dak bungalow. And it rained so hard all the next day that we kept to our shelter, resting and writing. But that night the rain eased off, and the porters began to sing. They sang as they cooked supper over a wood fire in the small cookhouse to the rear of the dak bungalow.

I went out to hear them. The sky was beginning to clear. The 23,000-foot peak to the east and the 21,000-foot peak to the west were still in clouds. A few stars showed in the west. As the singing stopped, I walked to the front of the resthouse and stood there perhaps ten minutes drinking in the silence of the night. There are bear, leopards, wildcats, hyenas, fox, porcupines, ibex, and deer in these hills. But there did not seem to be any life stirring abroad after

the storm. The chestnut trees (whose acorns are ground to flour called *sik*) looked like shapeless hulks on the slope below me. The far side of the canyon was a black, towering wall. Two of my porters joined me for a moment. Suddenly one of them touched my arm and shouted, "*Nag, nag.*"and shouted

Nag means snake, and Kalinag is the chief snake god of Kulu. There are snake gods on most of the ridges. Prayers and offerings are tendered these gods. I later discovered on the climb out of Koti to the Rothang Pass that there is a spot, marked by a pile of rocks, where Kalinag is worshiped. Here travelers often leave rice or milk or flowers —and sometimes even money. The snake gods are deities to reckon with.

When the porter touched my arm and shouted "*Nag*," he pointed to the valley up which we had come. At first I did not understand his meaning. Then it came to me. Up the canyon came the fog, traveling faster than a horse could run. It was stretched out at least five miles. Far down the valley it was a formless mass. Up front, however, it was different. Its head was the head of a serpent several hundred yards long, a hundred feet wide, and perhaps fifty feet thick. This head bobbed to the right and then to the left, stretching its long neck as it looked first one way, then another. On and on it came, headed straight for Rothang Pass.

It looked at us several times as it wriggled by; but it did not stop or turn. In a few minutes its head had passed far up the canyon to our right and disappeared. Now came the body of the snake—the thick fog —and completely enveloped us.

There were smiles on the faces of the porters. This was a good omen. The snake god was our guardian. We would pass Rothang safely on the morrow.

In a few minutes the whole camp was sound asleep.

Chapter 4
I Build a Bridge

Rothang Pass, which links the Kulu Valley with Lahul, means the Pass of the Dead. It is 13,200 feet high—higher than most of the mountains in the United States. It can be a dangerous pass. Storms seem to converge there, sucking ice-cold wind into a devastating downdraft. It is open only from June to October. Late travelers hurry across it, giving thanks to their gods for safe passage. On my crossing I learned what the natives knew—that death frequently stalks it. I saw dozens of horses and cattle dead from our blizzard. Though they had been dead less than two days, the crows and vultures had already picked out their eyes. And the day I passed, these scavangers were sitting on high cliffs patiently waiting for their feast to ripen before gorging themselves on the carcasses.

While Rothang, like most Himalayan passes, can be dangerous, the passage this day was a lark. The trail is broad, with long, easy switchbacks. For centuries it has been a main caravan route connecting Punjab with Tibet. It was the path taken by ancient raiders from the Kulu Valley who made forays on Lahul and Ladakh to the north; and also the path taken by the Lahulis and Ladakhis who came down from the north in retaliation. The thousands of travelers who walked this trail built and improved it as they went. The slate of this ridge provides unlimited flat slabs that from time immemorial have been laid in the trail by those who passed this way. The ascent of Rothang is therefore not unlike climbing the low, broad steps of our own Supreme Court Building, except that it is thirteen thousand times higher and much longer.

The tree line in the Himalayas is between twelve and thirteen thousand feet. On the climb to Rothang we left the fir and spruce at about ten thousand feet and then picked up scatterings of birch, juniper, and the thick bushy rhododendron whose bloom had already passed. But the total impression above ten thousand feet was one of green open hillsides topped with grassy meadows. There are many waterfalls—some higher and more vivid than those of our own Columbia River gorge. One of the largest cascades drops in a canyon several miles from the trail—a place so remote that in all the centuries its music has probably never been heard by human ears.

An estimated fifty thousand sheep and goats cross Rothang each

year—once in June as they head north for grazing in Lahul, once in September on their return. They take many of the flowers as they go. But they left a bounteous supply for me.

In the lower reaches were a host of buttercups, not as large as the ones I find at Green Lake in the Wallowas of Oregon and that I prize the most, but fresh, gay, and dainty. Chickweed, fern leaf, and white, pink, blue, and purple phlox hugged the slate cliffs. Grassy slopes had a host of anemones. Here and there were tall graceful primroses with light blue flowers; and I saw geraniums with a delicate blue that reminded me of the Richardson geranium in the canyons of the Wallowas. The mountain dandelion marched clear to the top. I did not see a pentstemon until I crossed the pass and started down the north side. But near the crest on the south side were massed effects of flowers which I have never seen equaled even in the rich volcanic ash of our Cascades.

There were acres of poppies below the pass—rich and luxuriant, some maroon-colored, some purple, some pink, some yellow, with heads bigger than silver dollars. Their stems were tall and hairy, and their petals were so delicate and fragile that they seemed strangely out of place in an environment where death rode all the storms that came down the mountain. Indeed these poppies bowed charmingly on slopes where death had only recently passed. And they left streaks of red and purple that ran a hundred yards or so, gay streamers on slopes where livestock, killed by the blizzard, lay bloating in the sun.

But richer and more colorful than the poppies were the cinquefoil. There was a yellow species as familiar as any in Washington or Oregon—tall and graceful and nodding to every passer-by. They turned acres of the slopes below Rothang to a rich yellow. And mixed with the yellow were light reds and maroons. These reds and maroons were also cinquefoil. They too were tall and charming. Sometimes they would grow separately in huge patches, forming a colored checkerboard—a checkerboard that covered dozens of acres across the shoulders of the range. Yellows, reds, maroons indeed ran riot below Rothang. They decorated the mountain more lavishly than even lupine and paintbrush decorate our Cascades. They brought me to Rothang unmindful of the arduous climb and the physical exertion. Under their spell I walked in a reverie of adoration for the exquisite art of the Master Hands.

There is an ice-cold spring of pure water on Rothang; a spring that forms a pool where we had lunch. The blizzard had left nearly a foot of snow on the pass. The sky was mostly clear as we climbed. But now dark clouds were rolling in from the north and east, concealing most of the view. There were, however, pieces of 20,000-, 23,000-, 25,000-foot peaks showing. Since they were only a few miles distant as the

crow flies, they seemed to hang over Rothang. Rothang was indeed a tiny pocket in a vast mountain range of snow and ice.

The peaks that showed were gaunt and majestic. They were where mountains were not supposed to be. They pushed against the sky far above man's zone. They were part of the supernatural world, the place where spirits live. They could be kind to man; but more often they were cruel. They were near and yet remote, beautiful and yet forbidding. The shifting light streaked across them, making their glaciers blaze. Then the dark cloud swooped down, removing all warmth from their ice fields. A sharp peak suddenly showed above the swirling clouds. It looked like a mirage—a phantom peak thousands of feet above the skyline. Then quickly it disappeared. The effect was eerie. At Rothang it seemed I was on the threshold of another world—a world where magic played the major role, where one in quiet meditation could contact the spirits that occupy a place existing far above the earth.

During this reverie I had been unaware of the brilliance of the light on Rothang. The sky was overcast. Yet, even so, my light meter, as a result of the snow and the altitude, showed that an opening of 22 on my Rolleiflex required a shutter speed of 200 (for Super XX film). As a consequence of the intense light, I was badly burned and suffering a severe headache when after a leisurely descent from Rothang I arrived at Koksar, the first village in Lahul.

Koksar, a village of a few mud huts and a dozen or so people, sits bare and treeless on the banks of the Chandra, a river which drops sixty-five feet per mile, a dark, raging stream which in the summer months is about two hundred feet wide.

Lahul, like Kulu, is in Punjab. Punjab means "five rivers." The Beas that flows by Manali is one of the five rivers. The others are the Sutlej, Ravi, Jhelum, and Chenab. The Chandra is a tributary of the Chenab. All five enter the Indus near Sukkur in Sind Province of West Pakistan. The division of this water system between India and Pakistan is one of the roots of the difficulty in the Kashmir controversy. Hence, when we made camp at a dak bungalow in Koksar on the banks of the Chandra, we were getting bleacher seats to a major international dispute—a dispute in which the villagers of the region had decided views. They were convinced that India was right and Pakistan wrong—so convinced that they vowed to support no Indian leader who espoused a plebiscite.

Lahul has most of the physical characteristics of Central Asia. It was called Lo-hu-lo by Hsuan Tsang, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, who visited it in the seventh century. Up to the tenth century it was a dependency of Tibet. Through wars and conquests it became, about 1700, a dependency of Kulu. It was not until 1846 that the British

absorbed it.

It is today, as it was centuries ago, sparsely settled—about four people to the square mile. For the most part this is bleak and barren country. Koksar at 10,431 feet has a burning sun by day and a chilling breeze at night. There are fringes of pine, fir, and juniper around 12,000 feet. The basins and meadows up to 16,000 and 17,000 feet are fairly rich in grass. It is there that goatherds from the Kangra district—barefooted, barelegged men called Gaddis, who wear a heavy woolen gown that they pull up around their loins while they travel—bring thousands of sheep and goats in summer. But the feed is high up. The valley of the Chandra and its canyon walls are mostly rocky expanses, barren of grass. Most of the wild flowers, including the wild strawberries, are shriveled by midsummer.

We found at least thirty travelers of the trail piled up at Koksar. Our blizzard had sent a tremendous flood down one of the ravines, washing out a bridge over a main tributary of the Chandra. This stream was about twenty-five feet wide at its narrowest point, one hundred feet at its widest. It was a dangerous torrent at its throat, at which point neither man nor beast could survive a crossing. But I scouted the lower reaches near its confluence with the Chandra and found that, though the water was fast, it was flat and not quite three feet deep. I would have taken any pack train in the Wallowas through that water or waded it myself. Not so the natives; not so my porters. A raging swollen stream is angry with intent. Some god or goddess seeks revenge from anyone who dares to trespass. Mules and horses are expensive—a good mule worth perhaps a hundred dollars. This is a fortune to people living, as these do, at the subsistence level. And the chronicles of this region are full of accounts of the loss of men and animals in swollen rivers.

Teddy Roosevelt, Jr., whose trail I later crossed, lost a horse in a Trans-Himalayan stream a quarter century earlier. It was in the Chandra itself that Moorcroft, one of the earliest British explorers, one whose trail I mostly followed, lost a pack animal about 1820. The Chandra has indeed claimed many horses and mules.

So it was that fear and caution halted these travelers at Koksar. Some were merchants with caravans headed for Leh. Others were pilgrims en route to Trilokinath, where a religious fair was being held. When we arrived, they were sitting patiently on the banks of the Chandra waiting for the water to subside.

“Why not build a bridge?” I said to one enterprising-looking muleteer. There was no response.

“We can cut down some trees for beams,” I added, thinking of the way we improvised in the mountains of our own West.

Budh Ram, my cook, spoke up and said, “But, Sahib, there are no

trees." And then it was that the bleakness of Koksar, the remoteness of the few trees that grow high on the canyon walls came home to me.

I sought out the Overseer of this section of the trail, a tall dark man with a thin aesthetic face, a Sikh by the name of Niranj au Singh. He was most sympathetic. He said he had two large beams adequate for the bridge, but there were no smaller beams necessary to fill in the central part. The Chowkidar, the local Indian official, had smaller beams. It was his duty to repair bridges. But he would not furnish these smaller beams without a price. The Chowkidar had sounded out all the travelers and they were not interested in paying for a bridge; they would wait for the water to subside.

"How much does the Chowkidar want for the beams?" I asked.

"One hundred rupees." (About twenty dollars.)

And so the negotiations started. We negotiated until late that night, and we resumed negotiations at 5 A.M. It reminded me a bit of some bizarre accounts of getting loans through the R.F.C. in former days. Finally the price was agreed upon—twenty-five rupees (about five dollars) for the use of four small logs.

As I handed the money to the Chowkidar—a short, swarthy man with shifty eyes—I said, "Let's make this a community project. We'll ask for volunteer labor from all of these travelers. Those who help will cross free. Those who don't help will be charged a rupee for the use of the bridge."

His eyes glistened as he saw the prospects of profit from a toll bridge, and he hastened to summon all men to the cause. About fifteen responded. Four men carried each of the big logs on their shoulders. Youngsters raced down with the lighter pieces. A half dozen men climbed high on the canyon wall and crossed to the far side. They snaked the beams across with ropes that had been thrown to them. Then they lashed the logs together and placed flat pieces of slate on top.

The bridge was finished in half an hour. I turned to the Chowkidar and said, "Since I paid for this bridge, it is mine. All who worked on it cross free. All those who did not work on it pay a rupee each to cross."

"Yes, yes," he said with a rising note of suspicion in his voice.

"I'll stand on the far side and collect the money."

There was now anger in his face; our relations had reached a great crisis. Collecting the money was his affair. Was this not a government bridge? Did he not have responsibilities? Who was I to interfere?

Teasingly I carried the argument as far as I could without smiling. Then I turned my back on the Chowkidar, walked onto the bridge, turned, and said, "All right, *you* collect the tolls. But you must always call this the Douglas Bridge."

"Yes, Sahib," the Chowkidar said, giving me the gracious Hindu

salute.

“On all the maps of India,” I shouted.

The Chowkidar bowed again. And feigning anger and disgust, I turned downstream and took the trail to Sissu, Gundala, and Kyelang.

Chapter 5
A Lady's Proposal

We paid off our porters at Koksar and they returned to Manali. These were not the type one reads about in Himalayan literature. They were villagers—farmers, hired hands, clerks in the bazaar at Manali. Had I planned a trek on foot, I would have arranged for professional porters, the best of whom are from Darjeeling far to the east of Manali. They have been trained by the Himalayan Club of India, beginning with the first British expedition to Everest in 1922. They are tireless travelers of the trail—efficient, loyal, and enduring. They would have been eager for the adventures of the highroad to Leh. Our Manali porters were not. Moreover, the profession of the porter is not in high esteem in the Kulu Valley. Carrying loads on one's back for another man is looked down upon. The reason has its roots in history. In ancient days the Rajah of Kulu demanded labor of each man. So many days a year were owed the Crown. This was known as the *begar* system. The lowliest of *begar* labor was the coolie, who carried freight for the Rajah on his back. Carrying the mail was less dishonorable. Providing wood and grass for the Rajah's camps was higher on the scale. The *begar* system was gravely abused. Many lost their health or their lives on dangerous missions for the Rajah. The work was looked down upon; a certain ignominy was attached to it.

That tradition has persisted. Porters are considered coolie labor, and coolie labor carries some of the disrepute of the *begar* system.

Our porters, however, were not in revolt or unhappy. That was not the reason why we paid them off. The reason was that at Koksar we found horses which would take us three stages, viz., to Kyelang, the capital city of Lahul. Rahul and I debated whether to gamble on another pack train at Kyelang. There was a half promise that we could get mules at Kyelang. We decided to take that chance.

The porters lined up for their pay the morning after we arrived at Koksar. The rate was three rupees a stage per man (about sixty cents), a stage usually being the distance between dak bungalows or about ten miles. Each porter was to get an additional 50 per cent of that amount each time we crossed a pass (there were six passes on our route from Manali to Leh). On the return trip they were to get one half the rate. They were also to get half rate whenever they laid over a day. Each porter was to supply his own food.

This morning at Koksar the main argument was over the computation of the amount I owed each one: There were many figures submitted, each man arguing for his own computation. It took about an hour to get the crowd to agree on a figure. And when it appeared that unanimity had been achieved, one lone dissenter spoke up. He maintained that he was entitled to one rupee more than all the others. And so he was. It happened this way.

As I said before, the first porters to arrive at our hotel in Manali took the lightest packs, leaving the heaviest for the late-comers. This caused an argument that grew in intensity at Koti. The poor devil who was the last to pick up his pack at Koti was a short, squat man with a mustache, a square chin, and a bulldog nose. When he felt the weight of the duffel bag that had been left for him, he roared in protest. His face was black with rage; his words came in a torrent. He shook his fist angrily, threw down the bag, and walked menacingly toward the other porters. Budh Ram tried to calm him. He shook his finger under Budh Ram's nose and whirled on the other porters, venting verbal spleen. Some of them laughed, only increasing his fury.

Finally he announced in Hindustani, which even I could understand, that he was through, and then demanded his pay, saying he would return to Manali. This was mutiny, one of the worst disasters that can happen on any Himalayan trek. No other porters were available. If desertion were established as a precedent, I would have trouble all the way to Leh. And so I made a speech. I spoke of the admirable qualities of these porters. I said that they were my brothers and that I would treat them well. If any was sick, I would care for him, pay him his wages, and see that he got home safely. But if any quit me along the trail, that was desertion, entitling him to no pay whatsoever.

The speech had an electric effect. The stubborn porter, like a good soldier, immediately picked up the bag. When I helped him put it on his back, I felt the awful load he was carrying and knew at once that his protest was justified. It was well above sixty-five pounds, far too much for any man. He and I brought up the rear, and we had gone only a few hundred yards when I thanked him for his sportsmanship and said that in return I would pay him an extra rupee today. He smiled, bowed graciously, and took to the trail with a renewed vigor.

I saw the porters off at Koksar, greeting each one. There was a sadness in the parting, for we had had adventure together and felt the camaraderie of the trail. I stood and watched them until they were out of sight. The last man to disappear under a shoulder of the mountain turned and waved. He was the stouthearted one who carried the dreadful load over Rothang.

Tashi (which means "good luck") was our new employee. He was short and stocky, middle-aged, pleasant, quiet, efficient. He had with

him his son, about fourteen years of age. They had ten horses and were going as far as Kyelang, three stages distant. I agreed to pay eight rupees a day for each riding horse, five rupees a day for each pack horse. The horses were the small Punjab type, not even ten hands high, with small feet and fairly sturdy shoulders. We rode two; the rest carried the baggage. Tashi and his son walked.

By the time the horses were packed, I knew that I could go with Tashi in confidence to the end of the earth. He was one of those quiet, steady, competent men who show the mark of the mountains. His horses were also good. They were fast-traveling animals. The riding ponies had no bridles, only halters. The saddles, which had no stirrups, were crude wooden pack saddles, piled with sacks and blankets. Though the saddles were not painful, it was more comfortable to walk, as I did most of the way to Gundala.

The Chandra canyon, between a mile and a half mile wide, is deep and twisting, with the mountain walls going up on both sides at precipitous angles. There are here and there a few pine trees along the river and fir trees on the benches. These high benches, the day we passed, were filled with sheep and goats, white-fleeced animals that from the distance looked like great patches of flowers such as one sees in the Cascades of Washington when the squaw grass is in bloom. Now and then a bench close to the river had been planted in potatoes, millet, wheat, and a tall flowering plant that I first thought was a sunflower, called the *kuth*, which is grown for medicine. There were scatterings of yarrow, yellow violets, snapdragons, and delicate pinks along the trail; and now and then I saw whole acres of cowherbs in bloom—the tallest, most lush cowherbs I have ever seen.

The north bank of the Chandra, which the trail follows, is part of a huge finger of land, a sort of peninsula many miles long and eighteen thousand feet or so high. The Chandra flows on one side of this peninsula, the Bhaga on the other. The Chandra and Bhaga rise on Baralacha Pass (which we later crossed), flow in opposite directions at the start, then parallel each other, and finally join about six miles west of Gundala. A historic short cut is from Koksar over the peninsula to the foot of Baralacha—a wild, broken stretch of mountains that claimed the life of Hilda Richmond in 1939. We took the long way, swinging around this long finger of land.

Opposite us was a mighty range capped by Snowy Peak or Gundala Peak, whose exploration is described in Bruce, *Kulu and Lahoul*. One looks almost straight up from the river ten thousand feet. There are cliffs that are sheer for several thousand feet. Glaciers run to their edges, tremendous ice fields impregnated with dust and dirt so that when the afternoon sun strikes them they turn to gold. Some of these glaciers not only grip the shoulder of the high cliffs but also droop

down their sides like gargantuan icicles. Waterfalls drop from the cold lips of these glaciers; deep in one recess of these gargantuan rocks I saw three, each a thin, miniature Niagara but several times higher. They were falling unknown hundreds of feet in white, soundless spray, ending in milky streams that ran in torrents to the Chandra. The rocks sprayed by these falls were painted with moss and lichens. In the lower reaches some of the moisture from the ice fields watered high ledges and benches that were covered with a short green nap as smooth and as soft to the eye as velvet. The highest points, the topmost ledges, were filled with snow. The blizzard that we had traveled en route to Koti had left the high granite shafts that top the ridge freshly powdered.

Many tributaries feed the Chandra on its run to the confluence with the Bhaga. In the summer they are filled with a small snow trout, which I did not see but of which the natives boast. This day even the tributaries were murky with silt. One side stream about twenty-five feet wide was on a rampage. It had freshly gouged out the mountainside, sweeping away a bridge, washing away many feet of trail, and biting deeply into a ravine. We had to climb high to cross it.

Several travelers of the trail had piled up at the one place where the stream was fordable. One train, made up of small donkeys, was being unpacked so that the animals could cross on their own. Men and women were fording the stream, stepping gingerly in the fast, dark water, leaning against the powerful current as they fought their way across.

I took the crossing lightly, as if it were only a casual thing. A thin, dark Lahuli, wiser than I, noticed my cavalier manner and happily waded into the stream to meet me. We met just in time, for I was not prepared for the tremendous onslaught. The main current had me off my feet when the strong arm of my unknown Lahuli friend caught me and half dragged me to shore. While I was waiting for my pack train to catch up with me, my Lahuli friend and I stood guard at the ford, helping all travelers who came along.

Among them were two women and a baby. My Lahuli friend waded across, took the baby from the mother, and brought it safely to the other side. I guided the women, giving one of them a hand and letting the other lean against me. They were wet and breathless when they reached the shore. There were thanks in their eyes and on their lips as they uttered strange words of appreciation, put the baby back in the sling that hung over the mother's shoulders, and took to the trail.

Later we passed them. And when we were having lunch on a huge rock that sat astride the trail, they caught up with us and began a long conversation with Rahul. As he talked I studied these women. They were in their late twenties, with dark skin and coal-black hair. The

Kulu women had been about as dark, but they had sharper features. These Lahuli women had more of the Mongol characteristics. They were inclined to be squat, their noses flat, their foreheads high. They parted their hair in the middle, tying it at the back in a tight knot. Their hair, shiny with the oil from apricot pits, was adorned by headdress. One wore a white egg-shaped pin (*poshel*) at the top of her forehead; the other wore yellow egg-shaped pins on her temples. Each had long earrings of gold and several bracelets of silver on each wrist. They were barefooted, their toes gnarled like talons, and they walked with ease on gravel on which I would not have been able to take one step. They wore long black dresses of coarse wool, dresses with tight-fitting sleeves and bodices and large full skirts.

The mother did most of the talking; and I noticed that as she talked the other woman became coy, holding the corner of a gray wool shawl to her mouth.

The status of Lahuli women is different from that of Kulu women. They carry the full burden of the house and the main burden of the fields. The men plow in the spring and help out with the harvest in the fall. The rest of the time they sit under a tree and watch the women hoe, cultivate, and weed. And when the wheat or barley is cut, it is the women who carry it in baskets or slings on their backs to the threshing floor and winnow out the grain. Lahul is indeed a man's world. Kulu women, who, as I have said, enjoy a large degree of equality, therefore do not like to marry Lahuli men. A Lahuli woman likes to escape her drudgery and marry a Kulu man. A Kulu marriage is indeed the ambition of Lahuli girls. That is the way my cook, Budh Ram, got his lovely wife. She had come across Rothang Pass one day, and Budh Ram soon claimed her as a bride.

These Lahuli women, like the other Trans-Himalayan girls described in Kamal, *Land without Laughter*, though in an inferior social position, have a large degree of independence in their sexual relations. We would call them promiscuous. Budh Ram bashfully told me one day, "The Lahuli girls will run, but it is easy to catch them."

Part of the loose morality is doubtless due to the fact that these girls live along the caravan route where lonely, carefree men from Yarkand, Leh, and Manali travel. These caravan men laugh when anyone speaks of prostitutes. Of course there are no prostitutes. One takes what he wants and goes his way.

I did not know all of this as Rahul continued his long conversation with the two women I had helped ford the stream. I was to learn about Lahuli women later. I did know that something highly personal and intimate was being discussed because the women, at first bashful and coy, were now giggling and laughing. Finally I asked, "Rahul, what the devil goes on? Are you arranging a date come evening

time?”

“No, no.” He roared with laughter. “This woman with the child has been telling me what a wonderful person the other woman is. You see, they are sisters. This one without a child likes you. She wants you to stay with her tonight in their village of Sissu.” By now the women stood watching me, grinning.

We were eating the condensed TF Army rations for lunch. I pretended to cogitate on the proposition as I finished a cereal bar and munched salted almonds. Finally I announced the decision. “Rahul, we’ll compromise. Tell her that instead of staying in their village I will give each of them a present.”

With that I reached into the TF rations, found four cookies, and gave two to the baby and one each to the women. As Rahul translated my message and presented the cookies, they gave us angry side glances and took the trail to Sissu.

Chapter 6
A Court In Lahul

The day I built the bridge at Koksar we went fourteen miles and spent the night at Gundala. Gundala is a small village of a score or so inhabitants. The houses are square affairs with flat slate roofs. Both outside walls and the roofs are plastered with a stucco made from mud. Some have two stories with the people above and the cattle below. Gundala runs at a steep pitch down a mountainside that is dotted with a thin stand of juniper. There are millet, barley, and wheat on the terraces that reach to the river; and willow trees and aspen keep most of the village in shade.

It is ten miles to Kyelang, a distance we covered in about three hours. We traveled in a light, cold rain and were accompanied all the way by the endless echoes of thunder rolling round and round in this narrow canyon of the Chandra. Kyelang is on the opposite side of the mountain behind Gundala. It is a village of several hundred people that sits prettily high on the banks of the Bhaga River. Across the river is a Buddhist monastery on a lonely shoulder of mountain. Kyelang has a bazaar of a dozen or so shops, a grade school, a dispensary and hospital, large administration houses, a cold spring that comes booming out of a pipe, and narrow cobblestone streets where pack trains can barely pass. It is a delightful place in summer months, seldom getting warmer than 73 degrees.

The streets of Kyelang are lined with aspen and willow. The willow is the common white willow of the Old World, the one that is naturalized in parts of the eastern United States, the one that is the standard wood in England for making cricket bats, artificial limbs, and the charcoal used in the manufacture of black gunpowder. The white willows at Kyelang are old and gnarled, two to four feet thick. They have been topped for years and used for wood and so are squat and stunted. New plantings of willow shoots are wrapped in cloth or twigs for protection against the goats. On the slopes above Kyelang are scatterings of juniper (pencil cedar), reminiscent of the juniper one finds in the Steens Mountain country of southern Oregon. And here and there are a few of the willow leaf sea buckthorn—a willow-like tree of the oleaster family (*Hippophae salicifolia*). At both ends of the Bhaga canyon, as seen from Kyelang, are huge snow-capped peaks with glaciers that, during a summer day, reflect in changeable moods

most of the colors of the spectrum. Kyelang, green and lush, lies like an oasis—an oasis in granite, snow, and ice.

Kyelang, the capital city of Lahul, was in charge of a Tehsildar, a young, soft-spoken, pleasant Sikh by the name of Mahindar Singh Randhawa. I met him as I arrived at Kyelang in the rain; and he assured me as I dismounted my pony in front of his office that the weather was "most unusual."

Lahul, though a part of India, is a foreign land. The most common language is Tibetan, and yet it is somewhat different because of the Lahuli dialect. The greetings along the trail out of Manali were in Hindustani—"*Ram, ram*" or "*Namaste*." In Lahul they became Tibetan —"*Ju Ju*" or "*Ju Le*."

Buddhism entered Lahul from the south in the eighth century. In the twelfth, Tibetan Buddhism, with its trappings of Lamaism, came down from the north. About the same time, Aryan Hinduism came up from the south. These two religions lived peacefully side by side and together wiped out the earlier nature worship and its ugly practice of human sacrifices.

Though I said that Lahul, in its relation to India, is a foreign land, it would perhaps be more accurate to say that Lahul is an in-between land owing its allegiance to India, its culture to Tibet. But the political ties are winning out. Today Lahulis are even taking Indian names so as to have better standing along the trade routes that tie more tightly to India with each passing year.

The features of the Lahuli people, particularly the women, are oriental. The women wear dark, tight-fitting trousers over which is a coarse, long-sleeved dress, tight at the waist and having a full skirt. They carry the load of work in the fields, as I have said. The day I reached Kyelang there were a few men plowing with a dzo (a cross between a yak and a cow). They were singing plaintive folk songs as they worked. But a deep silence hung over most of the fields, where the women were cultivating. Each was bent low, swinging a short-handled adz with an easy rhythm. Later in the day they came in from the fields with huge bundles of barley and buckwheat tied in slings and thrown over their shoulders. Others had on their backs large woven baskets, looking like inverted cones and filled with grass and vegetables. Now they walked stooped and bent, like old crippled people. But when I came on them suddenly, they giggled like schoolgirls, showing beautiful white teeth.

These Lahulis, who in all respects are dominantly Tibetan, are looked down upon by the real Tibetans. One reason for it is that the Lahuli is a half-breed. India has touched him and affected him. It has to a degree diluted his Tibetan blood and altered his Tibetan culture. He stands somewhere in between two ancient peoples, not

passionately a part of either. Tibetans, therefore, consider Lahulis inferior. A Tibetan can take a Lahuli woman for his wife. But a Tibetan girl is not encouraged to marry a Lahuli man. The Lahuli man has indeed an unhappy position. The women on the south side of Rothang Pass do not covet him, partly because of his exploitation of his womenfolk, partly because there is a greater variety of food in Kulu than in Lahul. The women on the Tibetan side of the Himalayas do not want the Lahuli man because he is "inferior." Lahul is an in-between place—one from which men and women both want to escape. Perhaps that is one reason for its sparse population. Perhaps that is one reason why the men have such sad and plaintive voices when they sing their folk songs.

The one I best remember—one sung for us by five male villagers of Jispa, the next village beyond Kyelang—is about the girl Angmo.

Angmo used to live with her parents when a child.
When she grew up she fell in love with a boy.
They married happily.
After marriage the girl left Lahul
And went and lived with her husband,
*Forsaking her parents and brothers and sisters.**

**See Appendix 4, song 2*

These Lahuli folk have an in-between status in another respect. While there are a few landed estates, the country is mostly populated by small farmers. The few Lahulis who own sheep and goats go north in the summer and south in the winter. The sheep one sees there in summer months come up from the Kangra for a few months' grazing in the high basins.

The rainfall in Lahul averages about twenty-three inches annually. May, June, and July are lush months. By August the ground is dried out and the grain is turning brown. By September the land is barren and dusty. October sees the passes clogged with snow. Lahul is then isolated until summer. November or December brings snow to the valleys. Thus Lahul is frozen tight most of the year. There is no place for much stock. A dzo or a cow or two is all a family has.

Even the independent farmers work land that usually is not theirs. They are largely squatters on government domain—families who have taken a likely-looking bench above a river, cleared it of rocks, and planted barley. Maybe the project prospered; more than likely it failed. And so one sees along the Chandra and the Bhaga grim outlines of old fields long forsaken. The family has moved on to another location, seeking brighter prospects.

I sat with my Sikh friend, Mahindar Singh Randhawa, the Tehsildar

of Kyelang, as he held court at Jispa, fourteen miles above Kyelang. We sat in the open at a table on the edge of a stand of ancient juniper three or four feet in diameter while alpine choughs (glossy black with yellow beaks and red legs) soared overhead. Lahulis had come in from miles around for the court session. The men stood huddled around us, twisting their brimless and loosely woven wool caps. They were awed by the occasion—solemn and frightened too. This was the long arm of the law reaching out from remote Delhi to touch the lowliest of them. Their womenfolk and children had come to court with them. The women sat quietly in a circle on the perimeter of the court, knitting stockings and nursing babies. Women and children were also grim. There was no laughter in the crowd, no playfulness among the youngsters. This was the day of reckoning for their menfolk.

This court had no marshal, no court crier to announce it—no "oyez, oyez, oyez." The Tehsildar convened court by calling the names of the cases. The cases were actually *Punjab* vs. *Sonam, Punjab* vs. *Thundup, Punjab* vs. *Tsering*, etc. But this kind and warmhearted judge merely called the names of the farmers, and each replied. There were dozens of cases, and they took hours. The following is typical.

"Sonam, where is your farm?"

"Three miles below Jispa on the bench just below the junipers on the right hand of the Bhaga."

"That is government land."

"Yes."

"Did you pay for it?"

"No."

"Have you paid taxes?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I have no money."

"How long have you been there?"

"Ten years."

"What crops do you grow?"

"Barley and a few vegetables."

"How much barley a year?"

"One year I got very little. In other years just enough for me and my family. I have a wife and four children. They are over there" (pointing).

"Have you animals?"

"My brother and I have a dzo between us. He works land near me. We both live in Jispa and walk three miles to our land every morning. My wife walks too, but she is not strong any more. Is there land we can have closer to our home?"

"All this land is government land. If you want it, you must make

application for it. Then you must pay taxes. You never made application. You just walked onto the land and claimed it. And you have never paid any taxes."

"That is true. But how can I pay?" he asked with despair in his voice.

This was the story over and over again. The sun had set and a cool wind whistling down from Baralacha Pass was rustling the papers on the table when the Tehsildar took a recess for the day. Later this friendly officer sat with Rahul and me eating dinner in the dak bungalow—soup, hamburgers, cocoa, canned fruit, and *chapattis*. Discussion turned to the court session.

"Are these families on this land legally?" I asked.

"No. They are all illegal squatters. The law of Punjab provides that a man may homestead public land and that he has a period of time to make payment for it. But he must pay."

"How much must he pay?"

"About two hundred rupees [forty dollars] an acre."

"Have any paid?"

"None."

"Do they all owe arrears in taxes?"

"Yes, all of them."

"What is the law of Punjab in such cases?"

"The squatters must be ejected."

"Is that what you are going to do tomorrow? Eject them?"

There was a long pause.

"None will be ejected," he finally replied with emphasis. "You are a judge and you know that law is law but that the law is not always justice."

I nodded but answered, "Yet this is public property."

"True," he replied, "but these farmers are India's outposts. They occupy land bordering countries that may be unfriendly. It is important that India keep this border country populated. Certainly Soviet Communism exploits every discontent in India. It is better that India sacrifice her legal rights or even lose a part of her public domain and have happy people here than that she enforce her legal rights and end up with discontented citizens on this sensitive northern border."

"Why can't the people pay taxes?"

His eyes were now wide with seriousness. "Why, these people only subsist. They raise barely enough to live. They trade barley for wool from Tibet and make their own clothes. I suppose none of the families we saw this afternoon has a cash income each year of even ten rupees."

Ten rupees is only two dollars, I thought. With two dollars a year per family the women could have a little talcum powder perhaps, a

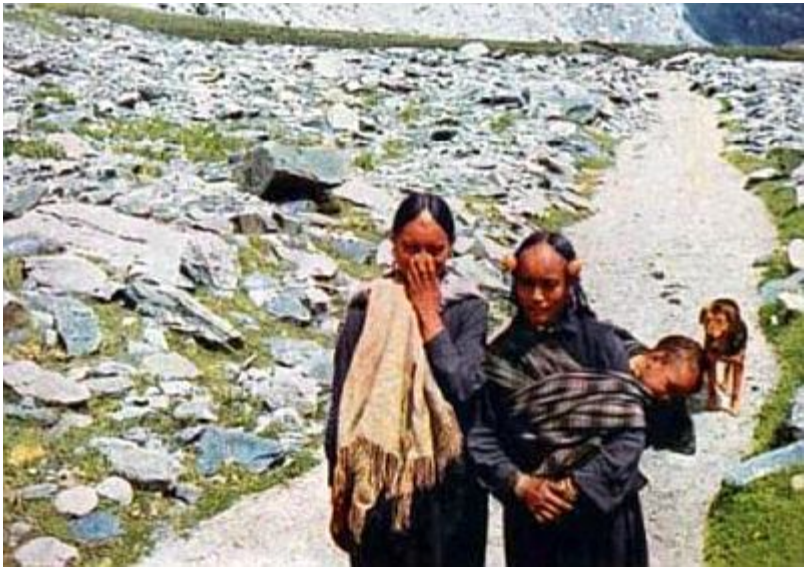
little hair oil, a few pieces of soap. There would be precious little, if any, for tobacco, for medicines, for sweets. I recalled a scene that had happened earlier this day. A dozen or more children from three to ten years old had gathered around me at Jispa. They were in tatters, a bit pinched in the face, very shy, and very dirty. I opened a small bag of chocolate drops. The children at once held out their dirty little hands, their eyes big with expectation. As I put one piece in each hand the fingers closed tightly on it. The first bite was taken carefully and tentatively. Then the expressions quickly changed—the eyes lighted, the tenseness was gone, the faces were happy and relaxed, and one little fellow actually shouted. The chocolates were wolfed down as quickly as a dog swallows a morsel of meat. In a few seconds each of the dirty little hands was stretched out to me again.

These little tots stood huddled together for hours, following me like a shadow wherever I went. And every time I looked at them they would shyly hold out their tiny hands palms up and look at me with eyes that carried as powerful a plea as man with all the skills known to drama could devise.

At Rothang Pass it seemed that I was on the threshold of another world - a world where magic played the major role, where one in quiet meditation could contact the spirits that occupy a place existing far above the earth.

The women of Gya were giggling as they started to sing. The song is a take-off on a man accused of being a lama. The man's name is Tashiwangyal and he is the singer.

The Gya singers were accompanied by an orchestra of two musicians.



Budh Ram bashfully told me one day, "The Lahuli girls will run, but it is easy to catch them."

Building my bridge at Koksar was a community project.

Chapter 7
My Musical Mule Train

Tashi and his horses took us to Kyelang and then left us, for he had a previous commitment to pick up freight with his pack train at his own village of Ramling (near Sissu). Our plans were uncertain. We might have to recruit porters among the villagers of Kyelang and go to Leh on foot. On the other hand, we might possibly have mules, for we had met in Koksar a young, amiable man in his twenties—Rup Singh—who said he would try to meet us at Kyelang the third day and take us to Leh with his mule train.

The third day came and went and there was no sign of Rup Singh and no word from him. The morning of the fourth day arrived and we were about resigned to completing our journey on our own. Rahul went to the village of Kyelang to arrange for porters or, if at all possible, for other transport. Meanwhile I climbed the range behind Kyelang to scout for wild flowers. I returned about noon and was on the porch of the dak bungalow showing Rahul the rewards of my climb. I had in my hand the stickweed or forget-me-not, handling it as tenderly as a museum piece. When I found it near a stand of juniper, a great flood of memories poured through my mind. This was an old, familiar friend who seemed to me to be far from home. For the place where I best knew it—its accustomed place—was on the slope above my cabin in the high Wallowas of Oregon. Though it seemed strangely out of place here, this might well be closer to its home than Oregon, to which it may have been carried by animals or by planetary winds.

I was explaining this to Rahul when we heard bells. We gave them no particular attention because many caravans had bells and were continually passing along the trail just below the stone wall at the end of the slope in front of the dak bungalow. These bells got louder and louder, unlike any we had heard. They sounded as if they were the bells of dozens of caravans. We started to race down the slope to see what was about to pass under the stone wall in front of us, when the caravan turned onto our lawn.

Up front on a bay horse was Rup Singh, grinning and beaming. Behind him came ten mules heavily hung with bells. Behind them came two young men on foot—Chhomphel and Ram Chand—whistling and shouting and racing to keep the mules out of sheaths of barley freshly cut and piled behind our bungalow.

Some of these animals had the build of Missouri mules; some were closer to a donkey's stature. Two were gray; others were bay. There was one chestnut and one that seemed to have a touch of palomino in him. Most of them had tassels hanging from their necks—red or yellow and about two feet long. Each had bells. Some of the bells were eighteen inches or so long, as wide as a fruit jar, heavy and ponderous, and deep-throated. These were the basses. Some were tiny bells smaller than a walnut, with two dozen strung on a leather band that fastened around the neck, a bit reminiscent of Christmas sleigh bells. These were the sopranos. There were bells as big as apricots, similarly fastened to leather neck straps. These were the altos. A few of the mules had a half dozen larger bells each—bells of the size of teacups. These were the tenors. And a few of the mules had bells that were hung inside each other like camel bells of Persia. These bells ran almost a full scale.

Bells, bells, bells! What a din they made! Every movement of an animal rang a bell. As they milled around us the noise was so great we could hardly hear each other. I found myself shouting to Rahul and he in turn relayed the message in a shout to Rup Singh. It appeared that Rup Singh had had no lunch. He would get lunch, return at once, and we would push on to Jispa, fourteen miles distant, this afternoon. Rup Singh left with his mule train, and when the noise gradually died out a deep quiet settled over the peaceful dak bungalow. We sat on our packs until late afternoon. Rup Singh did not appear. We were up early the next morning and yet there was no sign of him. It was not until ten o'clock that he appeared. Our plan to reprimand him for his long delay immediately evaporated. As soon as the mules entered our gate we were drowned in music. Bells, bells, bells. They did something to us. We were at once relaxed, happy, excited. We greeted the smiling Rup Singh as a long-lost brother, forgetting to scold him. There was music in the air, music in our hearts. At last we were off to high adventure—adventure set to music, the haunting music of tinkling bells, booming bells, soft melodious bells, bells that set a tingling sensation running up and down the spine. The music of the bells had reflex effects in our fingers, our toes, our legs. I found myself trying to catch up with the music, trying to walk to its rhythm. And then a mule would break away, change his pace, and set up a discordant note. Then there would be more noise than music. Yet even so there was a melodious chant deep in the noise. Rup Singh's muleteers, Chhomphel and Ram Chand (two young men in their twenties), drove stakes and stretched a chain between them at ground level. When they tied the mules to this chain, the music subsided except when a quarrel between two mules would end in biting. But even so the effect of the music carried over. I noticed that Rup Singh

as he loaded the mules (in a manner similar to our Montana packs) was softly, almost inaudibly singing.

"What is your song?" I asked.

"Not a song," he said. "I'm just talking to myself and the mules."

"What are you saying?"

He laughed as he replied, "Hurry, hurry—hurry, hurry."

Hurry, hurry—hurry, hurry. That seemed to be the effect of the bells on both the mules and the men. Actually they may not have had any such effect. For as the days passed I noticed that my mule train could not be pushed above an average of two and one quarter miles an hour. Yet hour after hour, day after day, hurry, hurry—hurry, hurry seemed to be the message of the bells.

We skirted cliffs that dropped off a thousand feet below us. The bells rang out—hurry, hurry—hurry, hurry. We climbed steep pitches to reach high passes of sixteen, seventeen, eighteen thousand feet. In spite of the thin air, the command of the bells was always hurry, hurry—hurry, hurry. We swung down meandering canyons, forded streams, crossed high basins, passed through herds of wild asses, pushed into the nose of severe storms, threaded through narrow, rocky defiles, climbed to hogback ridges along swinging trails of switchbacks—and always the command of the bells was hurry, hurry—hurry, hurry. We were in the coarse sand of wind-blown ridges, or among rounded boulders of old river beds, or in rock fields of granite splintered by frost from overhanging cliffs, or on bleak and barren plateaus pock-marked with the huge holes of whistling, fat-bellied marmots, or in high meadows touched with green from a thinning turf. And the mule train played the same message—hurry, hurry—hurry, hurry.

Our first night out from Kyelang I asked Rup Singh about the bells. Most caravans had bells, but none ever had so many bells. These bells gave a complete orchestration. We could be heard for a mile. Why so many bells?

Rup Singh grinned as he replied, "The music is good for the mules. The louder the music, the more contented they are. It keeps them from quitting—keeps them going."

Perhaps Rup Singh was right; perhaps he was only transferring to the mules his own attitude. Certain it is that the bells had a profound effect on us. They broke the monotony of bleak trails. They picked up one's spirits when physical fatigue set in. When one was aboard, they gave relief from the constant jogging of the animal. Even on the slowest stretches, the most grueling climbs, they produced the sense of motion, of progress, of achievement. They often produced these effects in curious ways.

Frequently it seemed to me that the mules were synchronizing their steps to produce familiar tunes. Up front was a big gray mule with a

long, yellow tassel hanging from his neck. He led the way, picking the trail, choosing from among alternate routes, grinding steadily on, never stopping, not even nibbling, except for bites at overhanging boughs of willow trees. His role was one of steady industry. The other mules were not tied; each was on his own. For the most part they walked single-file, staying close together. Then the mule train would pick up a rhythm, and I would catch pieces of familiar tunes.

Occasionally on a fast pace I would hear a part of the refrain, "*It's a long, long way to Tipperary, and my heart's right there*." Usually the beat was slower, more measured, such as "*Old MacDonald had a farm, E—I—E—I—O*." The pace would slightly change, there would be discord, and then as clear as any bell would come:

> *There's a long, long night of waiting*
> *Until my dreams all come true*.

There would be another change and "The Tattooed Lady" would tumble out.

> *Come on and see,*
> *Come on and see*
> *The famous picture gallery*.

The pace would quicken, "The Tattooed Lady" would fade away, and in her place would gradually emerge:

> *How are you going to keep them down on the farm*
> *After they've seen Paree?*

During one day's travel pieces of dozens of familiar songs would be played on the bells. Medleys by the score would echo from granite cliffs in narrow canyons or wing away on the severe winds that howl across the high Himalayan basins. No piece would ever be completed. This was mutilated music—pieces of tunes strung together by jumbles of discordant notes. And yet there was a haunting quality about it. It had a quickening effect on tired muscles. It lifted up the heart. It seemed to make the seven of us humans and the eleven animals part and parcel of one endeavor, one adventure.

"Perhaps Rup Singh is right," I said to Rahul at one of our last camps. "The bells have helped carry me to great heights. That I know. They may also have helped the mules."

And Rahul, a brilliant product of the land where mysticism is supreme, nodded knowingly and said, "Of course, music helps every living thing."

There was another reason for the bells. Rup Singh, like his father

before him, was in the caravan business. Sometimes he carried the goods of others. On this trek of mine he had two mules loaded with produce for Leh, some of it silk brocades from Bombay. Usually, however, Rup Singh carried goods of his own to sell along the way. The bells would tell the coming of the caravan.

I remember when we came to Upshi on the Indus, near the end of our trek, early one afternoon. The villagers heard our mule train at least a mile away. A ragged urchin scooted across a barley field headed for his house, shouting, “Here comes the caravan.” An old blind man sitting in the sun in a niche along a cobblestone way lifted his head, pounded on the wall with his cane, and called out, “Dolma, Diki, Zila, come quickly. Here’s the caravan.” Children rushed to the edge of flat roofs, pointing and shouting. Women cultivating the fields ran to the willows along the trail, excitement in their eyes and on their tongues. Men bestirred themselves and drifted down to the house of the head man of the village where we were going. Two women hurried to a balcony overlooking the path; and as we passed one of them said, “Now, Dolma, we can get some talcum powder at last.”

The bells brought news and goods from the outside world, a world so far away, so remote, that the stories about it seemed like legends. Yet that strange world sent wondrous products to the farthest reaches. And my musical mule train told of their coming with its bells, bells, bells.

Chapter 8
My Magical Hat

My magical hat was more of a helmet than a hat. It had inside an adjustable band that would fit any head; and, as in the case of most tropical headgear, this band held the helmet about a quarter of an inch away from the head. That feature of the helmet and its shape gave it a conventional appearance. But it was wholly unconventional in other respects.

It was made of a specially prepared opaque glass and was as white as snow. It was so rugged that it was proof against most accidents. It could not be broken with a hammer. It was as fireproof as asbestos. It was almost as light as cardboard. And it was waterproof. It never rained when I wore the hat, but I imagine that a Himalayan rain on the magical hat would have sounded like a hailstorm on a tin roof.

The fact that it never rained when I wore the hat was its most outstanding feature. Therein lay its magic. And when at times I began to wonder if the magic was fancied, not real, Budh Ram, Man Das, and Rup Singh would restore my faith. Maybe India is the only place where one can find such faith. Maybe that faith is part and parcel of the hillmen's belief in spirits that govern man's destiny when he walks the treacherous Himalayan trails—evil spirits that plot his destruction through avalanches, roaring torrents of water, and blinding blizzards; good spirits that comfort and protect him and drive off the evil ones. These legends and beliefs may have prepared a fertile soil for the legend of my hat. But the hat itself produced the seed that grew and flourished in that soil.

I have related the story of our departure from Manali on foot—how the villagers of Manali prayed for rain, how rain threatened as we started the trek, how destructive the downpour that struck us before we reached Koti. If I had worn my magical hat that day, it would never have acquired the reputation that it enjoyed, or perhaps the rain would have passed us by. But that day the hat traveled in a pack; it was unable to work its magic, and we were all soaked through.

The day we left Koti to cross Rothang Pass I wore my glass hat. Remnants of the storm clouds still played around the summits. There were some showers along the ridges, but none touched us. When we reached Rothang, dark clouds were swirling. There was the threat of snow and rain. But none came. We reached Koksar in bright sun that

afternoon.

The next day I wore the glass hat. And as I crossed the newly built bridge and headed for Gundala, I told Budh Ram, “I guess it won’t rain today.”

“Why do you say that, Sahib?”

“Because it never seems to rain when I wear the hat.”

Budh Ram and Man Das passed the word along to Tashi. I quickly discovered that my hat was fast becoming an object of interest—interest that grew and grew when it turned out that we were in clear sunshine all day long.

That night as Budh Ram served dinner in the dak bungalow at Gundala he asked, “Sahib, why is there magic in the hat?”

I groped for an answer, thinking fast as I stirred my soup.

“It’s the glass, I guess—the way the glass is made.”

The next morning, as we were packing up at Gundala, I said to Budh Ram, “Let’s pack the hat.” Budh Ram hesitated, looked at the sky, spoke to Tashi, stood undecided for a moment, and then slowly pushed the hat into a duffel bag.

We had been on the trail only a half hour when it started to rain. And it rained all the way to Kyelang, a steady rain with much thunder and lightning. That night as we were unpacking at Kyelang, Rahul laughingly said, “Man Das says that if you had worn the glass hat none of us would have gotten wet.”

After that I wore the hat. I wore it to Jispa, where the Tehsildar held court. I wore it the next day to Patseo and Zing Zing Bar. I wore it the following day when we crossed Baralacha Pass and dropped down to Kilung, and the next day when we wound down the canyon to the Tsarap River and then climbed to Chakchu, a notch in a rugged range where we camped beside a pure, cold waterfall. On none of these days was there even a dark cloud in the sky. They were brilliant days when the sun burned fiercely—so fiercely it blistered even Rahul’s nose. The glass hat is made for rain, not for sun, and I grew uncomfortably hot when I wore it hour after hour in the brilliant sunshine.

As a result, when we left Chakchu I announced in a loud voice, “I’m tired of wearing this hat. I don’t care if it does rain. Into the pack it goes.” And Man Das dutifully packed it away.

That morning we crossed Gongrechen Pass and La Chulung La Pass. We were now in the heart of Ladakh, where rainfall does not average over two inches a year, where the valleys are never deeper than six inches in snow, and where precious little dew falls. And yet bad weather was making up all around us and by noon was threatening. By the time we had reached the narrow canyon that has been cut by the clear water stream that flows north off La Chulung La Pass (which

means the Pass of Water and Wind), it was raining. It started as a short, spattering rain that came in gusts and soon settled down to a steady drizzle. A few miles south of Toche Phirche (where a scrawny stand of green grass provides some grazing) the trail drops steeply for several hundred feet down a narrow treacherous defile only a few hundred feet wide. Here the wind was whistling. It had ice on its breath, and it whipped the rain into our faces until they stung. All of us were wet and chilled through. We were shaking with cold, our teeth chattering, as we made camp on the barren bench called Toche Phirche. We put up lean-tos for our beds and stretched tarps on sticks to make a covering for the kerosene stove and the kitchen. While Budh Ram and Man Das were unpacking, they came across the glass hat. Budh Ram was grinning as he held it up and said, "Sahib, why did you pack it and let us get wet?"

It rained all night long—a steady, persistent rain. The cold wind whipped our rubber tarps relentlessly as it whined down from Pagmur Pass ten miles or more to the north. It was a bitter cold night wrapped in a soggy blanket of clouds. At dawn the visibility was only a hundred yards or so; the sun was not even a dim spot. Even when the clock showed that the sun was high, it seemed as if we were deep in a dimly lighted dungeon.

Rahul came to me after a conference with Budh Ram and Rup Singh to announce that the men wanted to lay over a day.

"Nonsense," I replied.

"But it will be cold and wet all the way to Pagmur. They don't want to get chilled as they were last night."

"Tell them I will wear my hat—the glass hat that has the magic in it."

Rahul laughed as he returned to make the report to the kitchen. I put on the glass hat and joined the group. We sat together having tea. Budh Ram suddenly jumped up and shouted, "*Suraj, suraj*." The sun was indeed out, streaming through a narrow, dark corridor of clouds. Though it quickly disappeared, it was plain that the clouds were lifting and that the storm was breaking up.

By the time the mule train was packed, we were in streaming sunshine and Toche Phirche was beginning to lose some of its sogginess through steam. There were black, ominous clouds on a high ridge to the north, the direction we were headed. Budh Ram pointed to them, misgivings written in his face. I grinned, pointed to my hat, and then to the clouds.

I was a good prophet. We climbed a thousand feet or so as we left Toche Phirche and soon came into a vast basin (called Kiangcha), mostly flat, fifteen or twenty miles wide, and stretching ahead and behind as far as the eye could see. This basin was covered with

scattered patches of the *dama* (*Caragana versi-color*), a low bush clinging to the ground like heather. It is used as fuel in this region and has the interesting feature of burning even though green. A moss called *burtse* (Eurotia) also grew here, a moss I had seen ever since we left Chakchu. It grew in clumps as big as a saucepan and was dried by the natives for use as fuel. We traveled the basin for several hours. There were ibex above us on the canyon walls to the west, feeding off and on, then stopping to watch us, but always keeping a thousand yards or more distant. The storm that had been making up to the north swung east and then south, leaving us in brilliant sunshine all the way.

I stopped to put some flowers in my plant press and before mounting my mule made the announcement that I was tired of wearing my glass helmet. "Does anyone want to wear it?" I asked.

Rahul spoke up, so I gave it to him. We moved on—Rahul, the glittering white helmet, and the dappled gray mule in the rear. In an hour we had climbed a slight rise in the broad basin and faced Pagmur Pass to the north and a host of granite peaks and ice fields to the northwest. A storm that was brewing among the peaks soon moved toward us. It came faster than a horse could run, sending out in front rough couriers of cold wind and sleeting rain. These couriers seemed to be on a hunt, for they chased before them a herd of wild asses. They were beautiful animals about the size of Missouri mules, with long tails, light tan bodies, dark brown splotches on their backs and heads.

They are animals that are very hard to domesticate. A young one touched by man seems to have the mark of pestilence on it, for it will never be reclaimed by its mother. Its meat is said to be very palatable; the Moslems of Ladakh have indeed a great fondness for it. Rup Singh up front rode to within thirty yards of the herd that had just come over Pagmur before they broke and ran. Before I could get my movie camera and telescopic lens into play, black clouds rolled over Pagmur like a wave and washed down on us. Photographing the wild asses was impossible. We leaned forward in our saddles, hugging the mules for warmth.

I shouted to Rahul, "The hat has lost its magic."

"With *me* it has," he laughingly replied. "*You* must wear it after this."

That night the word went through our camp (just below the north side of Pagmur) that Rahul did not have the magic, only Sahib. It poured that night, raining so hard we had to dig trenches around our pup tents for drainage. The morning was soggy; visibility was cut to a few hundred yards; the air was heavy with mist and the duffel bags heavy with moisture. I thought Budh Ram handed me the hat with

extraordinary eagerness this morning, an eagerness that nevertheless was mixed with some doubt. There seemed to be working in his head a conflict between his desire to get rid of the rain and his fear of stretching the magic of the hat beyond the point where it could be effective. Certainly it seemed dubious if any power could protect us from the weight of the clouds that hung low over Pagmur. Today may be the end of my act with the hat, I said to myself. In a little while everyone will know this hoax for what it is.

The magic, however, held. A south wind streaked down from Pagmur Pass, cutting a corridor of clear sky for us. A part of the storm veered to the east; a part went northwest. Clouds hung low around the peaks on all sides of us. But in an hour we were in sunshine, and by the time we had gone the eight miles to Zara, where we got horses and yaks, the day had the brilliance of a cloudless sky at sixteen thousand feet.

And so each morning after Pagmur, Budh Ram would hand me the hat as we broke camp. Each morning there were threatening clouds. But each day we passed through a dry corridor, the rain falling all around us. On and on we went toward Leh. As the miles passed, I grew more and more tired of the hat.

"You carry it," I said to Budh Ram one morning. "And if you tire of it, hang it on a horse."

"May I wear it?" he asked.

"No, no," Rahul interposed with a grin on his face. "It has magic only when the Judge wears it. But the magic may still be strong if you carry it or hang it on a mule."

And that is the way we handled the matter. Thereafter the white glass helmet was never packed. Budh Ram either carried it or tied it on top of a pack in full view. Rain clouds swept the ridges around us, dousing them with cold water. But the rain never touched us.

Budh Ram explained it to the goatherds and villagers we met. His eyes were always wide as he said, "It never rains when Sahib wears the hat. And the magic is so strong that when we carry it we are always dry."

And when the clouds would gather at the head of a canyon or the top of a ridge we were climbing, Rup Singh would turn to me with his infectious grin, point to the clouds, then to the hat, and shake his head. The hat was a talisman of good luck that lightened the burden of the trail and gave each man a sense of security even on high passes where rain and sleet and snow operate under an evil command to strike men down.

Chapter 9
Sheep Are The Goods Trains

There is an old Tibetan saying that "sheep are the goods trains, ponies and mules the mail trains." It was above Jispa where the court had been held and not far below Baralacha Pass that I saw the first sheep train.

The trail north from Jispa follows the narrow, winding Bhaga canyon. After a few miles the juniper thins out, leaving hills that are mostly barren in August. Jispa, which lies at 10,500 feet, is dry and dusty; but there are basins in the towering canyon walls that are 16,000, 17,000, 18,000 feet high which show touches of light green. There are wild roses along the trail—white and blue. A host of tiny saxifrage grow in the rock fields. These delicate white flowers are hardy and widespread; yet I found an occasional dwarf mountain dandelion even higher than the saxifrage. The Bhaga canyon shows no other colors in August—no color other than the monotonous browns and grays of the slate and granite that dominate the ridges.

The trail skirts bleak cliffs that drop hundreds of feet to the milky Bhaga, and at times climbs so high that the roar of the river (which drops 125 feet per mile) is lost. Clear water pours out of springs and snow fields high on the ridges and washes the trail; and occasionally a waterfall drops off ledges in cool spray that touches the faces of those who pass. But the total effect of the canyon is dryness and bleakness—a parched land that offers no shelter or shade.

Eleven miles above Jispa the canyon widens into a sloping bench on the far side of the Bhaga. That is Patseo, which means Stone Bridge. The stone abutments of an ancient bridge across the Bhaga are, indeed, still standing. Today the bridge is a flimsy wooden affair that trembles and shakes when a man or animal walks it. It is only safe for passage one at a time. Each of our mules—wise in all hazards underfoot—sniffed at it and took a few tentative steps before taking the full risk. Ram Chand, the muleteer with the high forehead, thin face, and scrawny mustache, stood guard, letting only one animal on the bridge at a time. Each mule seemed to be as relieved at his safe crossing as I was at my own.

Patseo has the last dak bungalow on the way to Leh, a two-room building that sits close to the canyon wall without shade or grass. We did not stay there, as our destination was Zing Zing Bar, which lies six

miles above Patseo and six miles below Baralacha Pass. We stopped at Patseo only for lunch and for a visit to the Patseo fair.

Bleak and barren, Patseo (12,400 feet) is an ancient market place. Merchants from Leh, Yarkand, and Tibet bring their produce there. Merchants from Kulu come up with freight. There bargains are made and barters effected.

Patseo is where I saw my first sheep train. Sheep and goats, a hundred or more in a band, were coming down from Baralacha Pass, loaded with little bags, one on each side, filled with salt. Up front was a big billy, aristocratic in his bearing. He kept to the trail, while the band that followed him was strewn above and below, snipping every green morsel as it dropped down to Patseo,

Most lakes in Tibet are salt; great crusts of it can be dug up from the shores. It is this coarse, unrefined salt that the sheep caravans bring down. The bags are of coarse wool sewn at the top with heavy twine. They are held on the sheep with a light cinch and a small rope that functions as a breast collar. These bags are seldom taken from the sheep in transit. The designation of an animal's load in this part of the world is a *khal*, and the *khal* of a sheep is 32 pounds. The *khal* of a horse is 128 pounds; the *khal* of a yak, 188 pounds. These sheep I saw carried perhaps twenty pounds apiece.

Sheep trains also bring wool down from Tibet. For many years Lahuli men have gone north in the late spring with sheep that were sometimes loaded with merchandise, sometimes not. They grazed as they went, and when they reached Tibet they bartered their merchandise or brought produce for cash; then, loading the wool in tiny bales on their sheep, they made the long return trip to Patseo.

The sheep and goats I saw coming down from the north with salt were unpacked at Patseo, the bags being piled in walls to form small corrals where the sheep would bed down at night. The sheep caravan had more than salt to offer. The sheep and goats brought wool, too, the wool on their backs; and the shearing started shortly after the caravan was unpacked.

The sheep caravan had not yet been unloaded before a train of twenty mules came swinging down the canyon. These were powerful, rangy animals carrying huge bales. Some of the bales contained wool from Sinkiang *via* Tibet; some, tea from China. A few of the mules packed salt and borax; a few, dried bundles of wild onion (*junbu*), which is used as a spice in India, marmot skins, and silk. The bulk of the freight of the mule caravans was wool—the special Sinkiang wool from the underbelly of the goat, the wool that is used to make soft Kashmir scarves and shawls. It was unsacked and piled in the sun before weighing, in order to rid it of the moisture collected from the storms it had been through during its long journey.

Several mule trains had arrived from Manali carrying cereals, tobacco, cloth, pepper, ginger, and sugar. These products from the south were exchanged for those from the north.

It is a rule of thumb that five sheep loads of salt are the equivalent of four sheep loads of barley or corn. There were scales at Patseo—crude scales that looked like miniature teeter-totters. The wool and salt were weighed; the corn and barley were weighed. Then the exchanges were made. This day—August 4, 1951—wool was selling at Patseo for two and one half rupees (fifty cents) a pound. Some money changed hands. But the bulk of the trading was by barter.

The sloping bench above the river at Patseo was dotted with tents, made mostly from pieces of canvas or cloth stretched on poles to form a roof. The walls were the sacks of grain, tea, or salt the merchants had brought to the fair or had purchased. They were piled on three sides as windbreaks. Each tent had a fire of dung. Tea was being brewed in large copper kettles; and *chapattis*—the thin, unleavened bread of India—was being baked on convex copper plates.

One mule train started down the trail to Kyelang and Manali loaded with salt and wool. Another started toward Leh heavy with grain. And just before we left for Zing Zing Bar a sheep train that had been at Patseo for several days started its long return journey north. The sheep looked thin and gaunt, for they had been sheared. The little bags they carried on their backs were now filled with grain. A billy was up front, leading the way. And the rest of the sheep were spreading out, looking for nibbles they had missed on the way down.

Zing Zing Bar (14,000 feet) is a vast rock field on the Bhaga, spewed from draws that run four thousand feet or more up the mountainside. These rock slides are a mile or more wide, devoid of all vegetation except red, yellow, and gray lichens and a few of the sturdy saxifrage.

At one time there had been a serai at Zing Zing Bar with rock walls and a galvanized iron roof stretched on steel rafters. But the weight of snow had crushed the serai, making it uninhabitable. I found a level spot in the vast rock field where I put my bedroll. And after inflating my air mattress and getting everything in condition for the night, I joined the muleteers.

They had piled some of our baggage in the form of an L to provide a windbreak, and they had a fire of mule dung going. They were making tea, a tea unlike anything we of the West know. It is called *gur gur cha*. The correct and proper way to make it is to brew the tea (which is kept in a bag) the day before, adding a pinch of soda and letting it simmer until it has a pinkish tinge. The next day put the brew in a churn, add salt and yak butter (*gie*), and mix thoroughly. Then heat the mixture until it is piping hot and serve.

Rup Singh omitted the first step. He had a tall, cylindrical, wooden

churn in which, with the use of a plunger, he mixed water, salt, and yak butter. After the butter was dissolved he poured the contents of the churn into the teapot. When the tea had boiled, it was ladled out in cups. It sounds repulsive and sometimes is, when the yak butter is rancid. But Rup Singh's *gur gur cha* was good. A cold wind was sweeping down from Baralacha, chilling us. The *gur gur cha* seemed to have a special warmth. It was nourishing too. We sat in silence for perhaps a quarter hour sipping it.

Then the muleteers ate their supper. They had a sack of flour made from barley that is cut when slightly green, then baked and ground. This flour is carried in every caravan that travels Lahul, Ladakh, or Tibet. It is the mainstay of each meal along the trail. My muleteers ate it in the customary manner—they put a handful of it in a cup of *gur gur cha* and stirred it up until it made a thick paste. This is the famous dish that is called *sattu* in Ladakh and *tsamba* in Tibet. My muleteers ate it with spoons, as we would eat porridge. Ram Chand had a method of his own. He mixed the paste so thick that he could dish it out with one finger as if it were cake dough.

This was the muleteers' dinner—*gur gur cha* and *sattu*. It was dinner in every caravan that was camped along the trails of the high Himalayas. It was Rup Singh's dinner every night during our trek—every night except the time we bought eggs and chickens and the day we were presented with rabbits as big as any in Arizona or New Mexico. *Gur gur cha* and *sattu* were also breakfast for the muleteers. But at breakfast they would also have *chapattis*, and each morning they would bake enough of them for lunch along the trail.

I talked to Rahul about the monotony of that diet. He agreed that it was monotonous, a monotony which the Lahulis, Ladakhis, and Tibetans try to break as frequently as possible with meat. "But it is a nutritious diet," he said. "*Gur gur cha* and *sattu* carry most of the natives over the Himalayas. There is energy in it. And look at their teeth! *Gur gur cha* and *sattu* may be flat and dull but they do not cause tooth decay."

I lay in my sleeping bag in the rock cairn at Zing Zing Bar watching the sky. Earlier I had seen a dipper teetering on a rock by the Bhaga River. Now a gray-backed shrike raced by. A few clouds showed in the west. Venus rode the skyline briefly to reappear hours later in Oregon. A wave of homesickness swept over me as I relived wonderful sunset hours in the Wallowas. Then Venus was gone. The wind died down and a whole host of miller moths descended on me, whirling around my head. They visited me very briefly, leaving as quickly and as mysteriously as they had arrived. Thousands of strange stars gradually appeared. A shoulder of Baralacha to the north blotted out the Big Dipper, though I thought I saw the end of its familiar handle sticking

out above a lofty range. The stars kept coming out until it seemed that the firmament would burst. They hung low, scraping the peaks. All was quiet except the roar of the Bhaga below me.

I lay there for perhaps an hour, absorbing the quiet beauty of the scene, when I heard music. It was a woman's voice, and it came from the trail a hundred yards or so below me.

Sheep caravans make leisurely treks. Their produce will not spoil no matter how much time is spent along the trail. The caravan may start at a distant northern point in June and return in September. The profit of the caravan is not only in the wool and salt carried south and the grain carried north; but the sheep while en route must eat, and so the treks are designed to provide the summer's grazing as well. Well-traveled trails are abandoned for routes that will provide grass for the sheep. The daytime may indeed be spent grazing ridges adjacent to the trail, while the nighttime is used for travel.

That night at Zing Zing Bar a sheep train passed down the canyon. How large it was, how small, I do not know. I only heard the rustle of feet and the voice of a woman who accompanied them. She sang of love; and the song she sang was an old, old love song of Tibet. I learned the full song later. This night I heard only snatches of it.

Like the fine and silky hair of our goats
Which climb up very high on the peaks
Of inaccessible Karakoram
So fine and silky is the hair of my girl.

Her eyes are soft as the eyes of the goats
That call their males on the mountain,
Her eyes are soft as the eyes of the goats
That hold the heavy teat to their young.

Her eyes have the color of topaz
With which she decks her head and neck
And this topaz has the soft color
Of the soft eyes, very soft eyes of our goats.

Her body apt for work is slight and supple,
As slight and supple as the bounds
Which our goats make, when they leap
On the curved flanks of the summit of Dapsang.

Her cheeks are ever fresh to my lips,
Fresh like the milk I draw daily
When the goats come back to the stable
From the swelling udders that sweep the ground.

The voice was a beautiful contralto, and I could hear her faintly above the roar of the Bhaga long after she had passed our camp. It was a haunting melody that she sang, a melody conveying a sense of loneliness in a deep Himalayan canyon already drenched with loneliness.

Chapter 10
Nehru's Horsemen

It was 3 P.M., August 9, 1951, and we were making camp at Pagmur. There was hustle and bustle in the air. Pagmur had good feed for the mules, and we were hurrying to unpack so that they could graze. The meadow at Pagmur was not lush as we know meadows in our West. But the sod was solid, not broken; and it ran for perhaps fifty yards on each side of a small clear-water brook that poured down a shallow valley that looked like a wrinkle on the shoulder of the mighty range towering in the south. Pagmur was green, and the meadow was decorated with cinquefoil fresh and bright after the storm.

Another reason for the hustle and bustle was the weather. Pagmur sits at the head of a V, the valley widening as it runs away to the north. Far to the north were jagged fingers of granite and glaciers piercing the sky. Around these peaks another storm was gathering, and we could see long streamers of it stretching along the ridges that formed the sides of the V in which we sat. We were going to be doused again. So we hastily put up pup tents and the canvas roof for the kitchen.

This job was finished and I was sorting the baggage when I looked down the valley. Here came four horsemen on a dead run. Their suits were gray, their hats squat, and over their shoulders they carried rifles. Their ponies were white. Three stood in their stirrups, leaning slightly forward; one bounced awkwardly on his horse and tried to keep up with the others. I went out to meet them, and in a few moments they reined up in front of me. The leader, a non-commissioned officer, dismounted, came three paces in front of me, brought his right heel against his left in a resounding click, saluted vigorously, and then addressed me in Hindustani.

I did not understand a word he said until he came to the last word, “Douglas.”

“Douglas?” I said. “*Ha gee, ha gee* [Yes sir].”

He saluted again, turned sharply, walked to one of the horses, untied a large cardboard package, returned with it, saluted again, and delivered the package to me. Then he made another speech and presented me with a letter. The letter was from the adjutant of the Indian Army Post at Leh, explaining that at Nehru’s request he was

forwarding movie film and mail to me by courier and requesting a receipt for the package.

I went to my pup tent and opened the package. I fondled the movie film carefully—fifteen hundred feet of 16-millimeter colored film that had been misdirected to Bombay and that Nehru had promised to forward. The new supply lifted my heart, for I had none left. The letters from home were precious and gave me a gnawing sense of loneliness and homesickness, compounded by the realization that the weeks in which I was completely out of touch with the world still had substantial time to run.

By the time I rejoined the four horsemen, their baggage train had arrived—yaks driven by Ladakhis and supervised by another soldier on horseback. I invited the soldiers to make camp with us and to eat with Rahul and me. I had Budh Ram draw on our reserves—our only can of cheese, our last can of butter, one of the last tins of fruit. The non-commissioned officer gave orders and his men went out and shot rabbits—big, rangy rabbits, "coyote size." They brought back six of them—enough for the entire camp—and Budh Ram outdid himself in preparing a stew.

At dinner we learned how they had found us, and we talked of plans for the morrow. It seems that they had ridden hard for eight days, covering at least thirty miles a day, searching the caravan trails and the byways. We were on a detour, and it was only by chance that they had looked up this narrow V-shaped valley for us. Their instructions were to comb the country south of Leh and then to wait on the main caravan route at Toche Phirche for eighteen days. If they did not find us by then, their orders were to return to Leh.

Before dinner was over I learned I was a fool for going into this vast Trans-Himalayan hinterland unarmed. We did not have a gun or revolver in camp. I had secured the necessary permit to carry a rifle and a shotgun and to shoot game as we traveled and had arranged to borrow the guns in New Delhi. But at the last moment a friend dissuaded me. We would be safe, he thought, without guns. We would be traveling too fast for hunting, anyway. So I left Manali unarmed. My boldest weapon was the butcher knife.

I had become a bit apprehensive once we crossed Baralacha Pass. The next day at Serchu I saw my first armed Tibetans. Serchu (which means "gold water") is a bleak, flat basin, perhaps five miles wide, that lies around fifteen thousand feet, hemmed east and west by naked ridges and peaks reaching twenty thousand feet or higher. We had stopped for a brief visit with two Ladakhi women and two Ladakhi men who were returning on foot 240 miles to Leh after a shopping trip to Manali—characters whom I shall introduce in more detail later in this chronicle. As we visited I saw two tiny specks come round a

point of land on the north end of the basin. They were hard-riding horsemen on white ponies, and as they drew close I could hear the bells on one. They soon pulled up in front of us in a flurry of dust and took the initiative in conversation.

"Where do you go?" "Who is the white man?" "Is he American or British?" "What is he doing here?" As Rahul talked with these Tibetans I surveyed them. They wore tight-fitting coats that came down over their thighs. One wore a nondescript cap, the other a tall-crowned hat with a small, turned-down brim. They both wore dark glasses and carried revolvers on their hips. I shook hands with each of them, giving them the Tibetan salutation, "*Ju Le, Ju Le";* and the older of the two smiled in return, showing prominent front teeth. Then they were gone, whirling their horses on a dime and racing with the wind toward Baralacha.

"What's their destination?" I asked Rahul. He had not been able to find out. They were on a fast journey to Lahul. The Indian-Tibetan border is mostly unsurveyed. Until August 1951, it had few security outposts. The people of southwest Tibet moved south into India freely and without restraint. Some went on commercial missions, taking caravans to Indian centers. Others moved north to Tibet in the summer and down to India in the fall, grazing sheep as they went. Others went on Buddhist pilgrimages to shrines in India. And many Indians went on pilgrimages to shrines in Tibet. The truth is that the Buddhist holy places in this area have no nationality; long custom and practice have made them common property to all Buddhists. People by the thousands have moved with ease across this border from time immemorial. The men I met at Serchu did not seem to be pilgrims. Perhaps they were traveling on a commercial mission and hurrying in order to return to Tibet before the Tibetan-Indian border was closed.

In early August 1951, that border was still open. The Dalai Lama was still at Yatung on Tibet's southern border, negotiating with the representatives of the Red Chinese government. The question whether he would return to Lhasa was still undecided. Pending that decision, the Chinese Army was waiting a respectful distance from Lhasa. When the Dalai Lama reached Lhasa on August 17, 1951, the Chinese Red Army moved into action. Communist contingents poured into Lhasa and then fanned out, racing across Tibet to posts on its southern frontier. But until that date the border was open.

I had seen again and again between Baralacha Pass and Pagmur these fast-moving Tibetan horsemen going like the wind and armed with either rifles or revolvers or both. There were a dozen or so in some bands. None had molested us. But the idea grew that perhaps some marauding band might.

This night at Pagmur I learned more startling news from my new

Army friends. There were somewhere in this region two hundred armed bandits who had raided for years in Sinkiang and Tibet but who had moved south as the Communist influence became strong up north. These were the famous Kasak bandits who for years had made their living by raiding. They would kill if they were resisted. But their pattern of raiding was only to run off all livestock, to seize all guns and ammunition, to take all the food of a camp, and then on a selective basis take what other articles of clothing or equipment suited their fancy.

The rifles of these Indian soldiers looked more and more comforting and appealing to me as the story of the Kasak bandits was related at Pagmur.

"When do you return to Leh?" I asked the officer.

"In the morning."

"What will you do when you reach Leh?"

"Be assigned to garrison duty."

"Isn't it more fun to be on the trail, camping out every night?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then stay with me. We'll all go to Leh together."

"But my orders read——"

I interrupted. "I'll make it all right with your commanding officer, with the General of the Army, and with Nehru himself."

The officer talked with his men, stood and saluted, and said, "Very well, sir."

And the apprehension of banditry faded away completely from the trek.

That is the way we rode to Leh from Pagmur—armed soldiers ahead and behind, a gay, happy lot. We had dinner together in every camp and lunch together along the trail. The officer in charge would usually ride far ahead, advising villagers of our coming and arranging hours in advance for musicians to play and dancers to perform for my movies and for my tape recorder. These were hard-riding, efficient, capable mountain men. They did their work well; and they also had an eye for relaxation and camaraderie. The officer saved a bottle of rum for one evening and with it entertained the whole camp. It had an electric effect on morale. In a little while the muleteers were singing, Budh Ram was happy, and Man Das, who had tired of the trek before we crossed Rothang Pass, now agreed it was a wonderful journey.

When we arrived at Leh, I met General R. O. Karve of the Indian Army, who had arranged the scouting party. I was his guest at the Officers' Club at Leh. Shortly after my arrival, we sat on the lawn of the club having tea and admiring the great range of snow-capped peaks that stand perhaps twenty miles opposite the club across the wide valley where Leh is located.

I expressed to General Karve my appreciation for the film which he had sent me. I praised the four horsemen and inquired how he had selected them. It appeared that when the messenger had arrived by plane with the parcel for me, Karve lined up his regiment and announced in his booming voice that somewhere in the mountains to the south was an American judge who was headed for Leh.

"He must be found. I am not sure of the trail he is taking because the route he gave the Prime Minister is partially blocked. My orders from General Cariappa [K. M. Cariappa, Commander in Chief of the Indian Army] are to find him and deliver an important package. Who will volunteer?"

The officer who headed the party stepped forward and saluted.

"Who else? I need men who are not afraid, men who know the mountains to the south. This is wild terrain, filled with high passes, bandits, and storms."

Another stepped forward; then a third and a fourth. And that is how the four horsemen were chosen.

There was a silence after General Karve finished giving me this account. An orderly poured black tea in large china cups and passed coarse sugar lumps, milk, and English cookies. Then Karve, gracious in every respect and generous to the smallest detail, turned to me and said, "We are proud of you, Judge. The Army figures on twenty days for your trek. You did it in fourteen days of actual travel. It's a new record."

And so my misdirected film and Nehru's mission had paid dividends which no master planner could have conceived.

Above Zing Zing Bar and before Baralacha Pass, the trail enters a long valley and looks down on a blue and sterile lake called Suraj Dal, or Sun Lake - a lake with nothing but clay and rocks along its shores.

Kyelang, green and lush, lies like an oasis in granite, snow, and ice.

My Sikh friend, Mihindar Singh Randhawa, the Tehsildar of Kyelang, held court at Jispa, fourteen miles above Kyelang.

Moti was content to be the laziest, the most irresponsible, the least worthy mule in all of Lahul or Ladakh.

The day we left Chakchu we climbed steadily through strange and exciting country, headed for Gongrechen Pass and La Chulung La Pass.

Chapter 11
Horses, Mules, Yaks, and Moti

The ideal way to travel Central Asia is by horseback, unencumbered by any pack train. That is the way the Tibetans and Ladakhis travel. They ride the small Tibetan horse that stands about ten hands high, has husky shoulders and small feet, and possesses great endurance. The natives travel for weeks on end in this way. They have no pack animals to slow them down. Their only baggage is what they carry in saddlebags or in the roomy pockets of their heavy wool coats. One of them will have a pot and another a small wooden churn for mixing *gur gur cha*. Each will carry a bowl, usually one of wood inlaid with silver or gold. Indeed one who travels Ladakh or Tibet without a bowl usually gets no food when he visits another's camp. The guest is supposed to hand the host his bowl if he wants the hospitality of the camp. These fast Tibetan or Ladakhi travelers carry salt, tea, butter, and flour in small woolen bags. They make fire with flint rather than with matches, and the fuel is usually the low *dama* bush that burns even when green.

Camp is made at night wherever there are water and grass. The men lie out in rock cairns. Their heavy woolen clothes are their night clothes too. They sleep on the ground, and are gone in the morning when the sky first turns to gray. They streak across high basins on a fast canter, climb the steepest pass with hardly a pause, and walk downhill, leading the saddle ponies.

I had seen my first Tibetans at Patseo—men, women, and boys in charge of salt caravans. As I related earlier, I saw my first armed and fast-riding Tibetans at Serchu. I kept seeing them day after day, going like the wind on their tiny ponies, taking short cuts across uncharted mountains, or eating their *sattu* and drinking their *gur gur cha* at their camps on sparsely green meadows. They would always be gone by daylight, moving fast and mysteriously, covering more ground in a day than we would often cover in three with our pack train. They had none of the conveniences of travel—no air mattresses, no tents, no canned food, no medical kit. But they could go with the wind, be swallowed up in deep canyons, streak like lightning along a high ridge, climb to the steepest pass, pick their way down rocky defiles, and shortly be cantering across a basin remote and isolated from all trails.

That is the way postmen in Ladakh have traveled from time immemorial. The head of each village furnishes a carrier to carry the mail from his village to the next one. And so it goes on horseback, twenty to thirty-five miles a day and, in emergencies, even farther.

That is the way I want to travel Central Asia. Being bogged down with a pack train has its disadvantages.

I briefly experienced that kind of travel when Tashi took us out of Koksar. I rode most of the way from Gundala to Kyelang, keeping ahead of the pack train, racing along the narrow trail that threads along the Chandra. My pony and I traveled fast, and I felt for once the joy of a good horse under me and Central Asia and its vast reaches out in front.

Most of the way to Leh, Rahul and I traveled with the mule train. There was one other exception, when we traveled from Pagmur to Leh with Nehru's horsemen.

About eight miles below Pagmur at a place called Zara we got horses and yaks. Zara is a barren, rolling basin that lies at the confluence of three bleak valleys. There is no mark of habitation at Zara except a few tents. Zara is indeed only a rendezvous for the goatherds of Rupshu—a region as remote from civilization and even from caravans as any place in Central Asia, an area inhabited by migrating tribes who have and enforce their own law quite independently of the central government at Leh.

Rupshu has large, fat marmots (called wild dogs by the natives), who peer curiously at all travelers. They pop in and out of their holes, running awkwardly. Then they stand and whistle in a tantalizing manner. The natives believe the marmot has the soul of a man who is mischievous and malicious. The fat is used externally for rheumatism.

Rupshu also has some geese and ducks, the burrhl or blue sheep, the big-horned *Ovis ammon*, a snow cock, and gazelles. Big brown wolves raid the flocks of the miserably poor people, called Rupshupa or Changpa, who roam its almost barren basins and ridges.

This area has bunch grass, the mossy *burtse*, the low *dama* bush, and a small sage-colored bush that the Tibetans call *jyapshen*. But one takes a long step between clumps of grass. The mark of overgrazing lies heavily on Rupshu. The mark of poverty is on the people and their possessions, as well as on the land. Their brown pup-like tents are often in tatters. The Rupshupa go barefoot, wrapped in heavy brown coats that reach to their ankles. The black hair of men and women alike hangs in a tangled mass down their foreheads and necks. Their skin has ground in it the dust of hundreds of storms, and they carry the look of people who have not bathed for months on end.

We met the Rupshupa at Zara on a small piece of green meadow by a clear-water brook that comes down from the east. They were

friendly and hospitable, and curious over my camera equipment. They were curious over me too—the first American ever through Rupshu. These people are not farmers; they are pastoral people who live on their herds of sheep, goats, and yaks. They run the small Purik sheep that have a fine wool and that lamb twice a year. They are primarily meat-eaters; and they stood grinning at me, showing front teeth missing.

They had good fast horses which we took to Leh. We wanted to reach Gya that night, thirty-two miles from Pagmur and twenty-four miles from Zara. The mules could not stand this grueling trip in one day, for we had Staglang La Pass, nearly eighteen thousand feet high, to cross. So we unpacked the mules, put their baggage on eight yaks, took saddle ponies for ourselves, and headed for Gya. We paid well for the service—three rupees eight annas per stage per animal, or $1.40 per animal from Zara to Gya, plus one rupee (twenty cents) for each of the six herders of the yaks.

The yak is an ox, low and powerful. It has large, sweeping horns and long fur, usually black. There are some wild yaks in Ladakh and Tibet. But most are domesticated. Their milk and butter are widely used. The butter is indeed indispensable for *gur gur cha*; and when rancid, it is considered not only especially good for *gur gur cha* but for the massaging of aching muscles as well. The dung is used for fuel; and it burns with a hot, light blue flame and no crackling. The yak's tail is sold commercially as a whisk to keep off flies or as a beard for Santa Claus.

The yak is *Bos grunniens*, and, true to the name, it does groan as it walks. The natives have no halter or bridle on a yak, only a ring through its nose, which always seems to be bleeding. Yaks can carry huge weights—250 or 350 pounds. A yak thrives on high altitudes; the higher the better, it seems. It can go practically anywhere in the high Himalayas, as high as man can go. It does not have man's great adaptability, for it would perish at even the relatively high altitude of Manali, 6,400 feet. It is at its best from 15,000 feet on up. Here it finds the velvety yak grass that is hardly visible at a distance. Here it also finds moss and lichens, of which it is especially fond.

I found out how sturdy the yak is. I climbed aboard one to sample its riding qualities. I sat for a while on its broad back, my legs sticking out rather awkwardly. Then I hung onto its thick hair with one hand as I urged it into a walk with my heels. Suddenly the powerful beast, with a quick motion of its hind legs, tossed me as neatly as my mountaineer friend—the late Roy Schaeffer of Oregon—used to flip a flapjack. And before I could rise and restore my dignity, the yak turned, gave me a glowering look, and went groaning down the trail.

The yak does not move fast. It took our yaks eleven hours to go the

twenty-four miles from Zara to Gya. They got a late start and did not arrive until 1:30 A.M. But they came through on a steady grind that took them through a blizzard atop Staglang La Pass, a blizzard that swept the peaks shortly after our horses and mules had crossed, a blizzard that at the altitude of Staglang La Pass might well have killed animals less sturdy.

The hard, fast ride I had on my Tibetan pony from Zara to Gya was exhilarating—as exhilarating as most (though not all) of the moments aboard Moti were dull.

Moti was my mule, a bay with a few white spots. Why I drew Moti from the musical eleven that we met in Kyelang I never knew. Perhaps it was because Rup Singh thought Moti met the requirements of the typical American mule and therefore would seem familiar and friendly to me. Perhaps it was an unkind fate that turned Moti toward me. Perhaps it was some old association with Moti's mottled nose—an association going back to the trails of Oregon or Washington—that caused my hand to caress it. Whatever the cause, Moti was mine a few minutes after the mule train met us at the dak bungalow. Moti was mine almost until "death do us part." And Moti did not wait long before flirting with destiny.

The first dramatic moment with Moti happened on the way to Jispa. I had waited until the pack train had passed me to get some pictures of the caravans coming down from Patseo. When I was through, the pack train was perhaps a mile ahead. Moti, almost as anxious to catch up as I was, hurried. There were washouts across the trail, and at one point we had to climb several hundred feet on an improvised trail, skirt a cliff eight hundred feet or more high, and then drop down again to the established trail. Moti made the climb all right and was negotiating the cliff when the accident happened. The improvised trail as it skirted the edge of the cliff was only a few feet wide. The drop-off was, for all practical purposes, straight down. There was no apparent danger in this stretch of trail; the footing was secure, Moti was at a slow walk, and there was ample room for a loaded animal. How Moti got her two rear feet off the trail and over the edge of the cliff I do not know. The trail swung out to the corner of a shoulder of the mountain and then swung sharply back. It was on the turn that half of Moti left the trail and I found myself on a mule, hanging over an eight-hundred-foot cliff. Disaster raced through my mind. There was no opportunity to dismount without dropping hundreds of feet. What I did I did instinctively—I remember leaning forward on Moti and grunting. I remember starting a prayer, "Oh, God——" I remember the empty feeling in my stomach as I hung over eight hundred feet of air. I could hear Moti's hind feet scraping the sides of the cliff; I could hear rocks dropping into the pit below us. Then Moti

was back on the trail, shaking herself. Neither then nor now could I give Moti any credit for the rescue. How she got back on the trail, how we were saved from complete destruction I do not know. My heart was racing like a trip hammer. It was several minutes before I was calm. Then I delivered myself of a lecture to Moti. The lecture started with the words, “You old fool,” and ended with resounding kicks in Moti’s ribs.

This matter of life and death the agonizing ten seconds we were suspended in space, seemed to make no difference to Moti. She was calm and relaxed and at once plodded forward at perhaps two miles an hour.

Shortly thereafter the trail took a deep swing into a ravine, and I stopped to take movies of the pack train as it came onto the trail opposite where I stood. When I resumed travel, the mule train was once again far ahead, and I urged Moti to hurry. My urging was not the cause of the second accident, for when it happened Moti was slowed to a snail’s pace. At this point the trail had been washed out by a swollen stream. The temporary trail climbed fifty feet or so above the permanent one and crossed the stream at a broad, shallow point. The trail was wet, and the micaceous soil was slippery. Those are the extenuating circumstances for Moti. But she deserves no sympathy for what happened.

I had believed that a mule was the safest transport for mountain travel. The ones I knew in the States were both safe and comfortable. A mule might stumble, one foot might slip—accidents happen to every living thing—but I never dreamed that all four feet would go out from under a mule, except perhaps on ice. Yet that is precisely what happened to Moti. She was on the wet stretch of trail and about to cross the stream when all four feet went out from under her, and she fell on her left side.

As she went down, I kicked my right foot free of the stirrup. But my left foot was caught, for Moti lay on top of me. There was much thrashing and splattering of wet earth as Moti struggled to her feet. I tried to kick my left foot free; but the stirrup had twisted, holding my foot in a vise.

I called “Whoa” to Moti while I tried to kick loose. But Moti did not heed me, perhaps because she understood only Hindustani, not English. She started to cross the stream at her conventional speed. I was on my back, yelling and protesting and issuing idle commands while Moti dragged me through the creek. It was big enough to get me thoroughly soaked, rough enough on my back and hips to make me very angry, and yet not deep enough to be dangerous. The danger started as Moti reached the other side and broke into a canter. I had not believed she had that energy. But it came in a flash. I was now

shouting, screaming, threatening. I was also struggling with the stirrup. Though my screams were futile, by some miracle I was successful with the stirrup. My foot came loose, and I lay in the trail with a sprained wrist and a bruised back.

"Whoa, you old fool," I shouted. Moti turned to look at me, and I thought I detected a grin on her face. She played the role well, for now she broke into a full gallop, running with all her might and looking backward once in a while to see how close I was.

I did not pursue. I sat in the trail nursing my wounds and shaking my fist at Moti. And as I sat there, I thought of the minister in the Steens Mountain country of southern Oregon who went to that vast and desolate region to serve as an itinerant preacher. Some cowboys played a trick on him—they sold him a pair of balky mules—mules that refused to cross any rise in the road. The minister would whip them, shout at them, push them, get out and try to pull them. But he never succeeded in getting them up the first hill. One day, after an exasperating hour, he stood in front of the team and said, "If I were not a man of God, I'd tell you — — — exactly what I think of you."

The memory of this yarn made me laugh out loud in spite of the indignity I had suffered. So I brushed myself off and ran after Moti. But I caught the beast only after she had caught up with the pack train.

That night at Jispa I looked at Moti's feet. She had no shoes. We found some in the pack and put them on. But Moti was still pregnant with accidents. At Kilung, on the far side of Baralacha Pass, Moti was walking on flat, level ground with not a stone nor a stick to interfere. Suddenly she fell down, all four knees hitting the ground. She was up awkwardly in a flash. The fall must have done something to her pride, for she laid back her ears, bit the mule in front of her, swerved to the side of the trail, and for the first and only time while I rode her actually galloped. She galloped until she passed the lead mule, holding her head high as if to say, "So you think I can't even stand up. Well, I'll show the whole blooming lot of you that I can run faster than you can."

Once Moti passed the mule train, she settled down to her steady pace, and the mule train soon passed her. The mule train went two and a quarter miles an hour. Moti went one and a quarter miles an hour. I could outwalk Moti anywhere in the Himalayas and frequently did. But Moti never seemed to mind. She was not aroused by my outdistancing her on foot—no matter how invidious I made the comparison. Except for that one competitive spurt, Moti was content to be the laziest, the most irresponsible, the least worthy mule in all of Lahul or Ladakh.

After Moti fell on her knees with me aboard, I examined her legs.

There seemed to be tenderness in the joints of her rear legs. The next morning one of her rear ankles was swollen. Rup Singh carried a needle about eight inches long which he used to sew up the sacks of food and clothing he carried in his personal pack. There was, I suspect, a tingling sense of joy in me when we borrowed that needle and with one hard, deep thrust punctured the pocket of water and drained it. But Moti did not seem to resent the assault. She limped for an hour or more and then stepped along the trail with more snap and vigor than she had ever displayed before.

We were talking about the episode at camp that night. “You see,” Rahul said, “it is the flesh, not the spirit, of Moti that is at fault.”

“I do not believe it,” I growled, remembering the devilish look in Moti’s eye the time she dragged me. And I felt my appraisal was the correct one by reason of what happened below Serchu.

The Tsarap River was swollen from rain the day we crossed it. It was black and angry and fordable only at one place. One had to pick his way carefully, because the water was so deep and so fast it could easily carry a man or an animal away.

The mule train crossed, leaving Moti and me on the bank. I kicked and I pounded. I shouted and I implored. Moti stood still, debating whether even to make a try at the crossing. In about five minutes Moti moved into the water. She went carefully and slowly, her movements being almost imperceptible. I kept my heels pounding her ribs so as not to lose the momentum of even the slow pace. In a few minutes we were in midstream and my stirrups were in water. To protect my feet, I lifted them onto Moti’s shoulders. I talked to Moti, at first softly, then more loudly, until I realized I was fairly screaming. Moti stood still in the middle of the stream, the water washing her belly. I kicked her on the shoulders with my heels; I used threatening language. Moti stood still. I lashed at her with the tips of the leather reins. Moti stood still. I slipped the belt off my trousers and used it as a whip on Moti’s flanks. Moti stood still. I repeated the series of verbal and physical assaults on Moti. Moti continued to stand still. My legs ached from the kicking, my voice was hoarse from the shouting, my arm ached from the whipping. Moti stood still. Now all was quiet, only the rush of the water against Moti’s side. I looked at my watch and timed the performance. A full ten minutes passed and I was still on Moti in the middle of the Tsarap River.

I do not know what Moti was thinking about. I like to think it was something uncomplimentary to me. For my thoughts were dark and ugly. Finally I said in a low voice, “Moti, you are sadistic. You are trying to punish me for fancied insults. You like to see me suffer.” There was again complete and utter silence. Minutes passed. I spoke again. “Moti, if you think you are going to make me get off and walk

to shore, you're a mistaken mule." Perhaps those words stirred something deep inside Moti, demanding action. Perhaps she finally realized there was no use bluffing me. Perhaps, as Rahul later suggested, she had cooled off her undersides sufficiently in the water of the Tsarap. Whatever the reason, Moti finally moved; and slowly, almost painfully, she brought me to the far side.

"What is this name, Moti?" I asked at dinner that night.

"Moti means Pearl," Rahul replied. "Don't you think Moti is the real pearl of Ladakh?"

"Pearl?" I replied in disgust. "Pearl? Why, I can't even imagine that Moti's own mother in her most tender moment of motherhood would call her that."

Rahul laughed and said, "Moti should receive *some* credit."

"For what?"

"For not dropping you off the cliff, for not dragging you to death."

I presented the case against Moti with passion. When I ended, Rahul said, "Be charitable. Accidents happen to everyone. Remember the yak?"

The yak train was in a narrow canyon threading its way along a precipitous hillside above Serchu. Yaks are the most sure-footed animals in the Himalayas—as sure-footed as the ibex. But one of these yaks stepped on a loose rock, lost its footing, and rolled over and over and over. It was headed for destruction in the roaring Tsarap. It had less than twenty feet to roll before it would be over a cliff into the stream. There was a level spot a few feet from the abyss. As quick as a flash—as quickly as a cat comes to her feet—this yak straightened up, stuck out its feet, held its balance, and stopped rolling. It shook itself once or twice, nibbled at some grass along the water's edge, and started up the canyon wall to rejoin the pack train.

"Mountains *are* full of adventure, aren't they?" Rahul said, turning to me.

"Yes, and so are bathrooms," I replied, remembering my list of friends who had been more seriously injured in and around their own tubs than the yak, Moti, or I had been hurt in the high Himalayas.

Chapter 12
The Spirit of Satan

Rup Singh's smile was infectious. It was the thing that had captured us when he arrived hours late at Kyelang. We had been cross and impatient and had planned to take him to task for his delay. But his beaming face and cheery attitude won our hearts and made us forget our complaints. His smile and the music of the bells of our mule train augured well for the journey. Moreover, he had a happy way with him, singing as he worked and handling the men in an easy manner.

I did not see the other side of Rup Singh—the ugly side—until we reached Patseo. We had agreed to camp at Zing Zing Bar the morning we left Jispa. When we reached Patseo shortly after midday, Rup Singh changed his mind. He said there was grazing at Patseo and not at Zing Zing Bar. But the only grazing visible at Patseo was on benches three or four thousand feet above the valley; and horse feed certainly would not be any higher on the canyon walls at Zing Zing Bar, a scant six miles upstream. The real reason for his revolt was never disclosed. Perhaps there were traders at Patseo with whom he wanted to dicker for caravan freight. Bales of wool, brought down from Tibet and traded for corn and barley, were stacked to form long, high walls as they waited for mule or horse transport to arrive from Manali. Perhaps Rup Singh saw a greater profit in a deal on that transportation than he did on the contract with me. Rahul suspected that was the reason for Rup Singh's change of mind. Perhaps he had seen at the Patseo fair some woman who promised excitement of the hunt and who was worth the expenditure of an evening. Perhaps the long, arduous trip to Leh seemed less attractive to him now that he faced Baralacha Pass than it had when we employed him.

Whatever the reason, Rup Singh went on strike. He sat down on a rock, dug angrily with the heel of his shoe, and spoke rapidly and contemptuously. Patseo was the best place to camp; he didn't like our attitude; these were his mules and they must be well fed; he and his men were tired, and a good rest at Patseo before tackling Baralacha would be the best for them. That was the tenor of his talk. I sought the shade of a tremendous rock while Rahul negotiated. Rahul won out, although it took an hour of heated argument to win Rup Singh over. Even then he was not convinced. Now the smile was gone, and he was

sullen and quiet.

He wreaked some of his revenge at Zing Zing Bar. One of the muleteers took the animals across the Bhaga and turned them loose to graze. It was apparent that by morning they would be three thousand feet higher, on a green bench which I could see—a lush-looking pasture around sixteen thousand feet high. Since we were to be on the trail at 7 A.M. Rahul arranged for one of the muleteers to go for the mules at the first streaks of dawn. Rup Singh countermanded the order. He sent Ram Chand at seven; and we were not on the trail until close to noon.

There was much perpetual ice to cross above Zing Zing Bar, dirty ice a dozen or more feet thick. The trail now threaded through great fields of shale broken from the ridges above us and flowing down the canyon walls. This debris filled both sides of the canyon for miles on end. The monotonous brown and gray of the rock, the bright snow on the high reaches, the dazzling sun, the absence of even a breath of wind made the ascent a grinding, laborious ordeal. It seemed an interminable time before we reached what seemed to be the top. At this point the trail enters a long valley and looks down on a blue and sterile lake called Suraj Dal, or Sun Lake, a lake with nothing but clay and rocks along its shores. Above the lake were huge drifts of new snow. The snow blocked the trail and was too soft to hold a mule. Some of the smaller mules had to be unpacked; and even the more rangy, robust ones foundered awkwardly in the drifts. One got stuck and in his violent struggles to get loose somehow threw his head against the corner of a pack box, cutting a huge gash just below his right eye.

In about a mile we came to Baralacha Pass, lying 16,200 feet. Baralacha is a barren, rolling amphitheater, not a saddle. This day it was touched with snow and dripping wet. The peaks that surround it were gripped by ice but now looked no higher than the White Mountains of New Hampshire, for at this altitude they were 23,000-foot giant peaks shrunk to small, irregular ones.

We stopped at Baralacha to repack the entire mule train and to attend to the wound of the injured mule. As we were about to commence the rocky descent to Kilung, Rup Singh, pointing to a sheep train headed for Patseo, told Rahul, “We have had so much trouble that it is time Sahib bought us a goat. We could have a real feast tonight if we had a goat.”

“Sahib may not be in the mood to buy you a goat today,” Rahul replied.

“Why not?” Rup Singh asked, his eyes blazing.

“Because you would not start today until noon and Sahib wanted to be on Baralacha by noon to get the best pictures.”

Rup Singh was sullen all the way down the rocky trail that tumbles off Baralacha to Kilung in a steep funnel of a canyon. He was cross at the mules and at the caravans we met. But a Tibetan, who carried a prayer wheel in his hand which he spun endlessly as he marched south with a caravan we met, beamed on all of us, including Rup Singh and the clouded face he wore.

Rup Singh was still sullen that night at Kilung, a sullenness much deeper than his headache and slight fever which I treated with my medical kit. He was also sullen the next morning as we started the easy and gradual descent down the long, winding canyon to Serchu. When we reached Serchu—a wide, bleak basin with thin, skimpy grass, lying at 14,000 feet—Rup Singh called a halt. We would camp here; he would go on to no other place.

"But we have come only nine miles," Rahul replied. "There's good grass below Chakchu and we can make that in a few hours." Rup Singh was adamant. "What difference does it make to you?" Rahul inquired. "Sahib pays you by the stage, not by the mile. Kilung to Serchu is one stage; Serchu to Chakchu is another. You earn as much whether you cover that distance in one day or in two days."

Rup Singh was silent for a few minutes. Then he changed his tack. He spoke to Budh Ram and Man Das, and they spoke to us.

"The Tsarap is too swollen to cross," Budh Ram said.

And Man Das, always homesick and easily frightened, quickly added, "We might be drowned crossing the river or lose a mule."

"But the water will be as high tomorrow as it is today," Rahul replied.

"Not in the morning," Budh Ram replied. "Rup Singh says there's not much snow water in the Tsarap in the early morning." It seemed as if we were about to lose our argument when the two armed Tibetans, whom I have already mentioned, appeared on their fast ponies. They had crossed the Tsarap within the hour.

"Any trouble fording the Tsarap?" Rahul asked the Tibetans.

The leader shook his head.

"How deep was the water?" The leader touched his knee, indicating two or three feet.

Rup Singh had nothing more to say. He lit one of the American cigarettes I had given him at Kilung and smoked it in silence. Then he mounted and turned the mules toward the river.

I have related the difficulty I had with Moti the mule on this crossing. I did kick Moti with my heels until the water washed the stirrups and then I rested my legs on her shoulders and pounded with my heels. All this was to no avail; Moti stood in midstream for over ten minutes and finished the crossing only when her mood dictated. Rup Singh had at first waited for me on a high cliff towering about a

hundred feet above the river bed. Then he came down to the water's edge and shouted futile commands to Moti. When Moti finally reached the shore, Rup Singh's face was a black cloud. There was anger in his voice, and his words lashed at me.

"You have ruined Moti," he said to me in Hindustani, Rahul doing the translating.

"How?"

"By kicking her in the sides."

"Moti was already ruined."

"She was an excellent mule until you rode her." Nothing more was said until we had almost threaded our way up the winding path to the top of the cliff. Then Rup Singh turned in his saddle, his face still clouded, and shouted, "You have done at least eight hundred rupees' [two hundred dollars] worth of damage to Moti by kicking her."

"Tell Rup Singh that Moti, and her mother, and her grandmother wouldn't be worth eight hundred rupees. Maybe it's about time I gave Rup Singh a piece of my mind," I said to Rahul.

"Don't do it. He might use it as an excuse to dump our baggage right here on the desolate banks of the Tsarap."

"But I can tell him in English, which he will not understand. And it will do me good to get it off my chest."

"Anger, like love, is understandable in any language," Rahul wisely said. And so we rode along the north bank of the Tsarap in silence most of the afternoon, dropping slowly down a barren canyon blazing in sunshine. No one said a word. The musical mule train was up front. Rup Singh and I brought up the rear; and Rup Singh, usually anxious not to be the last in line, now studiously kept behind me, counting the times my heels pounded Moti's ribs.

It was eight miles from Serchu to the tall stone marker which indicates the boundary between Lahul and Ladakh. We swung by that in silence after I had attempted to resume a friendly conversation with Rup Singh. We went another three miles, keeping mostly a hundred feet or so above the river. Now the twisting canyon was becoming more narrow. The trail climbed steeply and then dropped again to a nulla (ravine) where a clear, cold stream ran—a place called Banglang Zu. This nulla was almost fifty yards wide and covered with a solid floor of round, smooth rocks.

The muleteers stopped to let the mules drink. Rahul and I, after watering our own mules, rode through the nulla, climbed the opposite bank, and started down the trail to Chakchu. We had gone only a short distance when I turned around and immediately shouted to Rahul. What I saw was disturbing. The muleteers were unloading the mules, throwing the baggage in the rocky bed of the nulla. We went back to see what was wrong.

“We go no further,” Rup Singh said.

“This is no place to camp,” I replied.

“This is the end of the trek,” he answered. “We leave the baggage here and return to Kyelang in the morning.”

“Don’t leave the baggage in this river bed,” I replied. “We can’t make camp on the rocks. Bring it up to the shelf where the ground is smooth.”

“Carry it up yourself,” Rup Singh replied. “I am finished.”

Turning to Budh Ram, I said, “You and Man Das load the baggage on the mules and bring it up to the shelf.”

Budh Ram told Rup Singh what the orders were.

“No,” shouted Rup Singh, his eyes blazing. “You cannot use my mules to move your baggage.”

Rahul and I had a conference. It was clear that we were in a serious predicament. We were four days’ hard travel from Kyelang, the only place to the south where we could possibly get new transport. It was four days to Kyelang by mules or horses; it would be longer on foot. Ahead of us was vacant country with no villages. It would, in fact, be a week or ten days of travel to the north before we reached another village. The chances of getting transport along the trail were slight. All caravans we had met or passed were loaded. We could not possibly carry the camp on our backs, for without the muleteers there would be only four of us; and the baggage weighed about eight hundred pounds. Our only hope was to wait here until a caravan came along and arrange for it to return for us after it had finished its journey. We estimated that with good luck we could leave this nulla in ten days. Unless I abandoned the trek and our baggage, we might really be here for two or three weeks and consume our whole food supply in this bleak and desolate spot.

I called Budh Ram and gave orders to him and Man Das to bring the baggage by hand to the shelf above the nulla where we would camp. Rahul and I walked over to the muleteers. I put out my hand to Rup Singh and said, “Good-by, I hope you have a safe and pleasant journey home.” Then I turned to go.

He called after me, “I want to be paid right now.”

I came back to where he stood and said, “You don’t get paid one rupee. You broke your contract to take me to Leh. If a caravan comes along tonight or in the morning that will take me to Leh right away and will not charge me more than your rates, then I will pay you. If one does not come by morning, I will not pay you. I may be forced to abandon the trip. I may lose my baggage. I may be put to great expense because of you. The chances are the damage you cause me will be many times more than what I owe you.”

Rahul and I then climbed to the shelf and sat down, where we

waited for more than an hour. Below us was the Tsarap, white with clay, very swift, and a hundred yards or more wide. On the opposite canyon wall was a band of white sheep grazing in green basins several thousand feet above us.

This canyon where we now sat was once covered by a great sea that stretched far north, overrunning all of Tibet. That was one hundred million years ago. About fifty million years ago, great horizontal forces bore down from the north. What these forces were is still unknown. Perhaps they resulted from the earth's contraction; perhaps from a change in the rate of the earth's rotation. But whatever their origin, they were so powerful that in time they made wrinkles running east and west for fifteen hundred miles and rising to an average altitude of nineteen thousand feet above the Ganges plain. There was great volcanic action about fifteen million years ago. Granite intruded. Then came lava flows. The granite cooled under the surface, and its original covering was blown and washed away. The Himalayas rose to form the highest mountain range in the world. Their greatest growth ended two million years ago; but since that time they have been rising, and their upward movement continues even to this day.

The ridges of the canyon where we camped had been cut into weird shapes by wind, frost, and rain. Some had points as sharp as needles. Stretches of the skyline were saw-toothed. Great massive walls rose four thousand feet or more almost straight up and down. They were colored yellow, green, and brown. Some had purplish streaks or reddish tinges. There were large areas of micaceous rock in this canyon, rock that looked wet as it glistened in the sun. Sandstone, limestone, granite, and slate were mixed in helter-skelter fashion to produce as exotic color patterns as one will find in our own Southwest or in the Hindu Kush of Afghanistan.

Now the sun was setting. The sky was brilliant with gold, blue, gray, brown, pink. The shades would quickly change as clouds first broke and then rearranged themselves. Soon the clouds were low on the ridge. Now the whole sky was rich in colors—as rich as Arizona could produce. Then in one swift moment it was dark. The Big Dipper showed to the northwest, close to the skyline, with its handle standing almost erect. The cold south wind—the prevailing daytime wind in Ladakh—had been whining down the Tsarap River from Baralacha Pass. Now it began to die down. In a few hours the prevailing nighttime wind—the chill wind from the north or northeast—would pick up. The white sheep across the canyon had bedded down. A tiny light high in a ravine marked the camp of their shepherd. Rup Singh and the muleteers were still huddled together in the nulla.

Rahul and I sat mostly in silence. Only once did we talk, and then it was about Rup Singh. We agreed to wait him out if it took all night.

We speculated on Rup Singh's background and character. Rahul said, "I am a Buddhist, and Buddhists believe in transmigration of souls. We never speak of a man's dying; his soul merely leaves his body and goes to some other body. The important thing is not only what a man is but what he was before his present self. Is he better or worse? Is he going up or down the ladder?"

"What do you reckon Rup Singh was before he was Rup Singh?" I asked.

"R. S.," Rahul said as if talking to himself. "R. S. are his initials. Let's see what they might stand for."

"I have it," I shouted. "R. S. means the Reincarnated Satan." We both roared. And as we roared here came Rup Singh and his assistants and the mule train. He was beaming all over, as pleasant and gracious as the day we first met him at Kyelang.

"Speaking of the devil," I said teasingly. And before I could finish Rup Singh asked, "Is it all right if we camp with you? Then we can get a real early start tomorrow."

"To Patseo or to Leh?" I asked.

"To Leh, of course," he answered, a bit surprised that I need question it.

When we made camp the Big Dipper had dropped from sight and millions of new and strange stars were out. The cold wind had died. The faint roar of the Tsarap filled the canyon. The muleteers sat around a small fire of horse manure, laughing and talking. After a while Rup Singh came over for a conference.

"Make believe you are talking with Uncle Joe Stalin," I said to Rahul. "Be firm and precise."

In half an hour Rahul came over to my sleeping bag.

"Everything is wonderful," he said. "The Spirit of Satan is in a good mood. He knows he can't hold us up, for I refused to increase the rate of pay, and I gave him a lecture on morality. I did, however, agree that we would camp early tomorrow at Chakchu and give him the rest of the day off. But I made him agree to deliver us in Leh ten days from now—August 16. That's fast travel, for we stop two days at Hemis Monastery, and we are now 120 miles from Leh."

Thereafter Rup Singh was a happy, carefree, smiling young man. No shadow ever crossed his face all the way to Leh.

Three days later we were discussing the transformation at Pagmur.

"You are the foreigner in Asia," Rahul finally said. "And Rup Singh is the kind of a man who has to find out what kind of mettle the foreigner has."

"He won't go on strike again?"

"No. He's found out he can't scare you or blackmail you. And, moreover, from now on he would rather go to Leh than to Kyelang."

“Why?”

“Simple arithmetic. We’re now closer to Leh.” And then Rahul laughingly added, “You can with safety rely even on the word of the Spirit of Satan when your program matches his self-interest.”

Chapter 13
Pass Poison

The critical altitude for mountain sickness is usually ten thousand feet. If one is not sick at that height, he probably will not be sick (except in the event of great exertion) until he passes his own effective altitude. That altitude varies with individuals. Rahul figures his at twenty-five thousand feet. I figure mine somewhat lower. Mountain sickness has seldom touched me, and I have been to eighteen thousand feet.

One who goes slowly to the heights acclimatizes himself gradually. The capacity of the human body to adjust itself to the thin air of high mountains is amazing, as the records of the Everest expeditions show. Mallory, Irvine, Smythe, and the others could in a few weeks bring themselves safely to twenty-eight thousand feet. At that altitude man is always tired and depressed and moves in somewhat of a trance. If he were suddenly dropped there without a supply of oxygen, or if, reaching there with oxygen, he had a failure in his oxygen tank, he probably would die. It takes time to adjust the body to altitudes above ten thousand feet. But if one goes slowly and takes his time in the early stages, he need not experience any great difficulty, so far as altitude is concerned, on any Himalayan trek.

Mountain sickness does not always come over one suddenly. Nor does it always start with nausea or headaches or dizziness. It may indeed start with a feeling of great exhilaration, as if good wine had suddenly gone to the head.

When we reached Baralacha Pass, it was late afternoon and we still had several miles to go to Kilung. We were anxious to be on our way; yet I was eager for pictures and anxious to search the pass for wild flowers for the plant press. We took a half hour on those missions. Baralacha lies at 16,200 feet; and at that altitude any human being must slow down. I, however, was so absorbed in my errands that I forgot to do so. I was dashing here and there taking black-and-white and color stills and color movies, and pressing plants. This altitude, I thought, was nothing to worry about. It seemed to me that I had licked that problem. I was good. I must be extra-good, I thought. Altitude bothered some people, but it certainly did not bother me. I was confident, elated, and relaxed. It seemed as if I walked on air. I felt wonderful. Imagine anyone worrying about altitude! Pshaw! It's

largely mental attitude.

Those were my thoughts as I walked and ran here and there on my various errands. I did not seem to be out of breath. “I am in better shape than I thought,” I said to myself.

I had packed my cameras and plant press and was ready to mount Moti, the mule. I put my left foot in the stirrup, took hold of the saddle, raised myself, and threw my right leg over. At that moment I almost blacked out. I was all right in a second or two, and the dizziness quickly passed. So did the feeling of confidence and exhilaration. I now had a slight headache that grew and grew and was pounding when we reached Kilung.

In those brief seconds when I almost passed out the words of a friend came back to me. A few weeks earlier I had had dinner with him in the Gilgit area of northern Pakistan. In 1950 he was flying the Karakorams. His orders were not to fly above fourteen thousand feet without his oxygen mask. He tried fifteen thousand feet and felt no ill effects. He climbed to sixteen thousand feet and felt fine. Still without his oxygen mask, he went to seventeen thousand feet. He flew at seventeen thousand feet for fifteen minutes or so and did not put on his oxygen mask. “These rules are made for other men, not me,” he said to himself. “I’ve apparently got this altitude problem licked.” He felt wonderful. He felt like the champion who had had many drinks and was sure that one more would be just right for him. He felt a bit like Superman.

That was the last he remembered. He woke up twenty-three days later in a hospital in the Kingdom of Swat. His plane had gone into a spin and crashed, breaking most of his bones and causing a brain concussion.

Altitude, like alcohol, sometimes gives a false sense of strength, power, and poise. One who is not aware of this phenomenon may walk the high ridges like a fool.

The hill people of the Himalayas are aware of the grosser aspects of mountain sickness. They have seen horses and mules drop dead from overexertion at high altitudes. They have seen the minor symptoms of sleeplessness and the loss of appetite, and the major ones where the body swells, the lips turn black, the head and heart ache, the throat becomes parched, and the temperature falls. They know that one who has suffered one major attack of mountain sickness seldom survives another.

My trek produced no major mountain illness, although someone in the party was slightly ill after each pass we crossed. But the risk is prominent in every native’s mind. This is pass poison. Passes are unhealthy places. One never stops there long; he hurries over. The places are occupied by gods and goddesses, some of whom are evil.

They produce the storms that fell man and beast and leave their bones to bleach on these high and unhealthy places. They also send poison to make men dizzy and sick at the stomach, to make them bleed at the nose and swell in the joints, to make them faint and unable to walk.

Whenever one gets over a pass without being afflicted by pass poison or without suffering any other injury or disaster, the gods have been good to him. And so he always celebrates the event. He does it in several ways. He builds a pile of stones at the pass—called *obos* in Ladakh and *oris* in Lahul—and each time a traveler passes that way he adds a stone. And so the piles grow into huge collections. Everyone adds to them. A lama of distinction who is carried across a pass in a chair or who rides in state will not go by without having a rock added to the pile. A servant will hand him one from the ground, and he will drop it with his own hand. And he more than likely will add a prayer banner to the rock cairn or stop and burn incense there. The *obos* is a dominant ornament on every pass; and it is found also in other dangerous places such as in the steep and treacherous gorge between La Chulung La Pass and Toche Phirche.

The *obos* usually has streamers of colored cloth tied to the rocks or fastened to sticks that are planted in the rock pile. Prayers are written on these pieces of cloth, and each wind that blows makes the cloth flutter, and each flutter sends the prayer winging to the god or goddess of the pass.

The day we left Chakchu we climbed steadily through strange and exciting country, headed for Gongrechen Pass and La Chulung La Pass. There had been no trees north of Baralacha. The whole stretch of land seemed to be desolate and heavily eroded. Now the marks of erosion were lying heavier and heavier on the land. Once these mountains and valleys may have been lush. Now there was only an occasional patch of grass standing like a tiny island in a sea of slate pumice. Many buttes mounted the canyon walls. They were brown, yellow, green, and red; and the highest of them were flecked with snow. There is much sandstone in this stretch of country; the wind had whipped it and the rain had worked it into odd shapes—tall columns, peaked cones, cathedral-like towers. Weird formations stood in stately rows along the skylines for miles on end. And one massive butte, streaked with color, towered over Gongrechen Pass.

On the pass was an *obos* flying dozens of prayer flags. Ram Chand, one of the muleteers, brought a new streamer in his pocket. He stopped at the *obos* and reverently added it to the collection. His was a prayer for safe passage for himself.

My muleteers never failed to perform the ritual. Neither did Budh Ram or Man Das. Rup Singh went about it eagerly, doing with vim and vigor what most did in a perfunctory way.

The habit is deeply engrained. It goes back to the ancient religion of the Himalayas, to the practice of the Shaman religion. Shamanism was a form of animism that is traceable in the rites of North American Indians. One cult piled stones on passes and other dangerous places to appease the spirit of the pass. Hinduism came up from the south; Buddhism came down from the north. The new institutions of religion absorbed the old. Shamanistic elements, including the *obos*, were taken over by the new churches. Thousands of years ago men piled stones at the dangerous places; they pile stones there today, and will pile stones there tomorrow. For the old superstition is so strong it survives all religious change. And today the lamas indeed teach the old and young alike that this ancient superstition should always be observed.

Another rite is performed on the passes where poison works up into a potent force and often strikes men and animals down. It is a shout that every traveler gives as he reaches the highest point. *Ki-ki so-so lha gyalo* is the Tibetan version—Let the gods conquer. It rings from the lips of every traveler, young and old. I heard Rahul, Budh Ram, Man Das, Rup Singh and the other muleteers shout it. On pass after pass the same words rang out—*Ki-ki so-so lha gyalo*.

I had seen enough, as we neared the end of the trek, to appredate the sentiments behind these words. There is a power lurking in these Himalayas greater than any man. It slays and suffocates; it brings on dizziness and death; it causes men and beasts to stumble and fall and to lie gasping for breath while blood runs out of their noses or mouths. This power exacts a heavy annual toll. Before the trek's end I began to feel the relief the hillmen feel when I crossed a pass and started the descent. The relief was a natural feeling, whether one feeds on superstition or on cold reason. I found myself less and less inclined to make fun of the rites my men performed. I began to stop and reverently watch them add to the *obos*, tie up another streamer, or lift their faces to the sky and shout, "*Ki-ki so-so lha gyalo*." I was coming to be on an understanding basis with them.

I did not need to accept their spirits, their Shamanistic gods in order to respect their feelings and attitudes. One walks so far above the world, in a place so remote from civilization, at an altitude so high, that he feels the need for spiritual strength. We were 15,000 feet or higher for over a week. Perhaps that elevation makes those of us who were born and raised in the softer altitudes tense and nervous. I found myself on edge. I found myself preoccupied with worries that would never bother me in the Wallowas or Cascades. Perhaps that was another reason for my growing tolerance of the natives' superstitions. Perhaps. I too was feeling a growing need for sustenance from a Power, wiser, more powerful and resourceful than man. Whatever the

cause, when we reached Staglang La Pass, our highest one (17,479 feet), I too was caught up by the mood of the rite. I was on a gray Tibetan pony that, along with yaks, I had rented at Zara. It was a fast, sturdy horse, about ten hands. It had trotted most of the way up the long, narrow, sloping valley leading to Staglang La. The day was cool with a high, piercing wind coming off the pass. Storms had threatened all the way, spreading out on both sides of us and leaving us untouched. It was a good day for travel, and my pony and I made the best of it. We were the first to reach the long switchbacks that climb two thousand feet from the head of the valley to Staglang La. And my pony was in such good shape that he stopped only once during the ascent. We were the first on top and stood a few moments waiting for the rest.

Soon they all assembled, and I turned to the man behind me—the officer in charge of the Indian Army unit that had brought me my movie films—and said, "Let's do it all together." And then I shouted, "*Ki-ki so-so lha gyalo*." He beamed as he caught on and, turning, shouted to Rup Singh, "*Ki-ki so-so lha gyalo*." And so it went from man to man until I heard the booming voice of Rahul far in the rear shout, "*Ki-ki so-so lha gyalo*."

We all knew this was the last pass, that from here on it was an easy downhill to Gya, Upshi, Hemis Monastery, and Leh. Each knew he had conquered the great hazards of the journey and would survive. Each was, I believe, a God-fearing man—from me, a Scotch Presbyterian, to Rup Singh, a Shamanistic Hindu, to Rahul, a devout Buddhist. And each in his own way knew that he did not travel these trails alone, that there was a God who oversaw the whole journey and was mindful of the woes and struggles of each of us. The adversities we had shared, even our little quarrels, had given us a unity. *Ki-ki so-so lha gyalo* on top of Staglang La was the final binding cement.

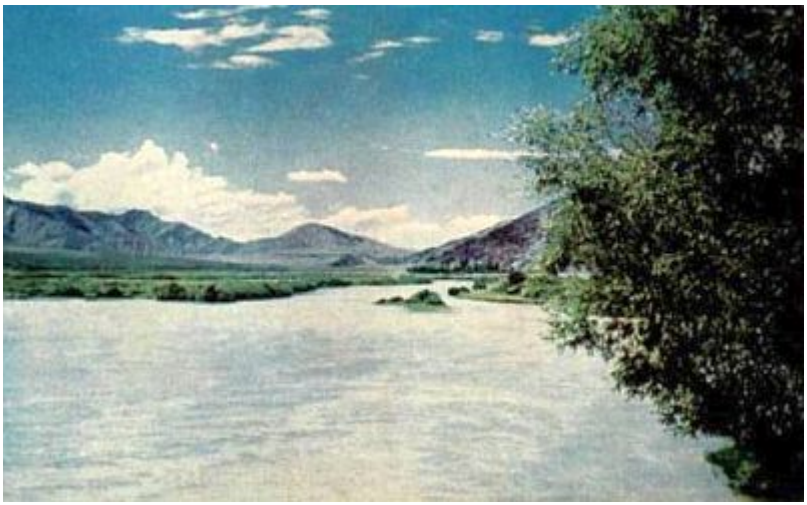
Ki-ki so-so lha gyalo was not a heathen shout meaning only "Let the gods conquer all the evil spirits." It was a thanksgiving prayer. It meant "Praise be to God." Our shouting it was an act of fellowship, a religious service as moving as any I have ever attended. And yet there were no candles, no altar, no organs, no stained-glass windows. All around us were soaring peaks, gripped by massive glaciers, and decorated with dazzling snow fields. Canyons a mile or more deep yawned at our feet. A howling wind blew like a blast from some Tibetan funnel over the coarse sand that covers Staglang La. The solitude and quiet were so deep they were overwhelming; there was grandeur as far as the eye could see. Staglang La was indeed a church, the most beautiful perhaps in all the world. It was there we worshiped. We stood alone before God and His startling creations and bowed in prayer.

There is a power lurking in these Himalayas greater than any man.

My most interesting patient was an old Ladakhi woman.

As one passes a mani wall, keeping it on his right, all the prayers engraved on the stones are said for him: Om Mani Padme Hoom, Om Mani Padme Hoom.

On Gongrechen Pass was an obos flying dozens of prayer flags, Ram Chand, one of the muleteers, reverently added a new streamer to the collection.



The valley below Upshi is several miles wide and the land lay mostly unused, the vast potential of the Indus being largely untapped.

Chapter 14
My Medical Practice

My medical kit had been assembled with a view to providing me and my staff with remedies for most of the ills or injuries which any of us might encounter. It included adhesive tape, bandages, gauze, absorbent cotton, iodine, scissors, spirits of ammonia, and the other customary articles in a first-aid kit. There were soda mints, aspirin, Empirin Compound, penicillin in disposable syringes and a few sleeping capsules, some Demerol tablets for pain, and a few eye lotions and salves. I had sunburn preventives and sunburn lotions (all of which mysteriously disappeared between Washington, D.C., and Manali). I had Atabrine and Aralen for malaria. I had no laxatives, as my anxiety was with dysentery and diarrhea. I had many bottles of water-purifying tablets, halazone, which kills practically all of the bacteria harmful to man except the amoebic sept. I carried bismuth and paregoric—bismuth to stop diarrhea, paregoric to stop the pain. My doctor, Hill Carter, assembled a variety of other drugs—sulfasuxidine, chloromycetin, aureomycin, streptomycin, and even the newest of the antibiotics, terramycin. And en route through Europe I put in a supply of Entero Vioform.

My emphasis was wrong in two respects. In the first place, I discovered that diarrhea and dysentery did not necessarily carry the grave threat I had imagined. In the previous two summers I had been ill at least once a week as I journeyed through the Middle East and Asia. I maintained that average no matter how much care I took. But I learned a valuable lesson in Karachi from Mrs. Avra Warren, the wife of our Ambassador to Pakistan. It seems that the native remedy for diarrhea and dysentery is the psyllium seed. Mrs. Warren learned that the psyllium seed is also an excellent preventive. Take a small handful once a day for thirty days; then take that dosage once a week. Americans have learned that one who follows that routine seldom if ever has the intestinal disturbances that plague Asia. I learned by happenstance that one Entero Vioform tablet with each meal serves the same purpose. I followed that routine on my Himalayan trek, and I was never ill from stomach or intestinal troubles.

In the second place, I learned at Manali from Dr. H. W. Williams of the Lady Willingdon Hospital that my medical kit should have been designed not only for me and my staff's needs but for the needs of the

natives as well. A foreigner who goes to these remote regions enters territory where doctors have never been. There are no medicines, no first-aid stations, no hospitals. A man coming from the outside world is expected to have medical remedies. The natives flock in at every camp for treatment.

But I learned this too late for me to enlarge my medical kit to any extent. I did, however, get several hundred aspirin from Dr. Williams as we left Manali. And that day was not gone before I started dispensing them.

The storm that caught us before we reached Koti the first day of the trek was a cold, devastating one. All of us, including the porters, were soaked through and chilled to the marrow. That evening at Koti six of them lined up in front of me.

"My back aches, Sahib," the first one said, indicating the muscles along his spine. Prescription: two aspirin now, two at bedtime.

"My legs ache, Sahib," said the second, rubbing the muscles of his thighs. Prescription: two aspirin now, two at bedtime.

"My head aches, Sahib," said the third, touching his temples. He had no fever. Prescription: one aspirin now, one at bedtime.

The next two had simple headaches but no fever. Prescription: the same.

The sixth one puzzled me. He had a severe headache around his eyes and his temples. I had no fever thermometer, but I knew from his forehead that his temperature was well above one hundred. He had a nasty cough that sounded dry and rasping. The man was sick, and I was stumped. I decided to roll him up by the fire, give him two aspirin, and then see him again in an hour.

His son, aged ten, had followed him from the village of Koti, apparently apprised of the father's illness. As the man lay before the fire, the son sat at his head and massaged his temples. In an hour I asked the patient how he felt; but before he could reply the son spoke up.

"This is a cruel world. You are rich, we are poor. We have to work hard for our living. Father gets up at dawn and works until dark. So does Mother. We all work hard. It is not fair. It is not fair that you are so rich and we are so poor."

Turning to Rahul, I asked, "What is the meaning of this?"

"Communist propaganda," he replied. "In this part of the world the Communists try to plant simple and troublesome questions in the minds of the young."

"Ask again about my patient."

Once more the son responded, complaining of the gulf between the rich and the poor.

"I don't care right now about your political philosophy," I replied.

“How’s your father?”

The man spoke. “Your medicine has made me ill. Now I am worse than I was.”

“Why do you say that?”

“Because my arms itch all over. They did not itch until you gave me the medicine.”

“Maybe the man is allergic to aspirin,” I said to Rahul. And so I changed the prescription: one Empirin Compound now, one more in an hour, one in case the patient wakes up during the night.

In the morning I saw the patient. The headache and fever were gone; but the dry, rasping cough was still there. He agreed with me that he should return to Manali and not attempt Rothang Pass. Rahul, my disbursing officer, paid him off, and I gave him several more Empirin Compound in case his fever returned. As he left with his son, he gave me the gracious Hindu salute and said, “Sahib, you are a wonderful doctor.” And his son chimed in, “There is no one to take care of us poor people. The rich have all the medicines.”

As long as the porters were with me, several of them came each night for simple treatments. When Tashi joined us at Koksar with his horses, I treated my first case of boils. Tashi had them on his arms. They were not ripe for lancing, so I bathed and dressed them and furnished him with salve, gauze, and tape when he left us at Kyelang.

Because of the wind, the dust, and the sun, sore eyes are one of the chief afflictions in Lahul and Ladakh. The sun in this dry altitude where the humidity is low has an intense burning power. Among dark-skinned people the eyes are the first to be affected. Every traveler of the high trails wears sunglasses if he can get them. The natives sometimes make them with crude wooden frames and horsehair stretched across for a lens. At Gundala a woman came to me with sore eyes. I bathed them in a solution of boric acid and filled them with a penicillin salve.

An old man, a Moslem, came to me at Gya with the earache. I warmed some Auralgan, put drops in each ear, and left with him a good supply of aspirin.

There were cuts and bruises, aches and pains of the head and of numerous muscles, red and burning eyes, light fever, colds of the head and chest. These I treated daily.

There was also pass poison. The night we reached Kilung after crossing Baralacha everyone in camp was sick. I was sure no one’s head could be throbbing worse than mine, but I had to care for my patients first. They lined up, and each got either an aspirin or an Empirin Compound, depending on the severity of his headache. Kilung, like all other stations north of Baralacha, has no dak bungalow. But, unlike most of the others, it has shelter. Under a huge

cliff there is a crude stone serai with a galvanized iron roof strung on iron rafters. It has a few rooms with cement floors and open windows, and a courtyard for the animals. When we arrived several other parties were there, perhaps six people in all. They had come over Baralacha and they too had pass poison. When they learned that medicine was being distributed, they joined the line and received the ration of aspirin and Empirin Compound.

One afternoon Budh Ram came to me complaining. He felt sick; he was afraid he would die. He had indeed an awful fever; and, dark-skinned though he was, he looked ghostly. I immediately gave him two capsules of chloromycetin and ordered him to take two every four hours until the next night. By then the fever had gone and his appetite had returned. I gave him soup, continued the chloromycetin, and kept him in bed. The following morning he was bright and gay.

"Sahib, you are a wonderful doctor," he said. "My wife will be glad I lived."

"Tell your wife that you are the first man in Kulu or Lahul or Ladakh to be saved by chloromycetin."

"Chloro who?"

"Just tell her chloro saved you. And if she asks what chloro looked like, say she was swift, graceful, and had magic."

"Yes, Sahib," said Budh Ram, his eyes dancing with pleasure at the prospect of teasing his bride about mysterious chloro.

My concern with diarrhea and dysentery at the time I made up the medical kit later caused me embarrassment. As I have said, I did not include a single laxative. Yet constipation is most common among the natives. Constipation, eye trouble, intestinal worms, venereal diseases, colds, and goiter are the chief ailments. There seems to be little tuberculosis or cancer. The importance of constipation was impressed on me with amazing clarity by Rup Singh.

Rup Singh stood before me, the corners of his mouth turned down and sorrow written on his face.

"I am sick, Sahib."

"What's wrong?"

"I feel sick here," he replied as he placed his hand on his stomach.

"Pain?"

"No, Sahib, no pain. I am constipated."

"How long since you had a bowel movement?"

"One week."

Here was a man who needed a simple medicine, a laxative; and I had none. I was puzzled. I had to do something, for my reputation was at stake, and one of my valuable men was ill. I fumbled in my medical kit, pretending to be looking for something as I tried to think of a remedy. As my hand touched a bottle of paregoric, I had an

inspiration. Paregoric, undiluted in water, is raw and burning; it is supposed to have the opposite effect from a laxative; it indeed helps stop diarrhea. But I had learned of psychosomatic medicine from my friend, Dr. George Draper of New York City; and I knew that the mind and the subconscious play a powerful role in medicine. I also knew that Rup Singh lived in a world where spirits rule and where magic and mysticism play an important role. And so my decision was instant.

I borrowed a tablespoon from Budh Ram and poured it brimful of paregoric. I held it before Rup Singh and said, "This will taste awful. It will burn all the way down. It will burn as badly as you imagine a powerful devil might burn if you swallowed him. But it won't hurt you. It will help. And the worse it tastes, the more good it will do."

Rup Singh nodded assent and understanding. He opened his mouth, and I poured the medicine down. His face showed the revulsion he felt; he gasped and sputtered and coughed. The next morning I asked him how he was. He beamed all over as he replied, "Sahib, you are a wonderful doctor."

And so my reputation as a doctor grew; and the word of my ability to cure constipation spread. Man Das was my next patient who suffered from constipation. I gave him the same prescription, and it had the desired effect. Goatherds, villagers, chow-kidars, muleteers lined up. And to each I gave paregoric for their constipation. And with each dose of paregoric I gave an incantation, calling upon all the forces in the foul-tasting medicine to come to the patient's rescue. It always worked; and my worries on that phase of my medical practice disappeared so long as the paregoric held out.

My most interesting patient was a woman. I had first seen her at Serchu where she, a younger woman, and two men were resting on their packs beside the trail. I came to know them two nights later when we camped at Chakchu, in Ladakh. (*Chak* means "flint" and *chu* means "water.")

Chakchu is a rough, narrow defile on a hogback of a Himalayan range. It lies at 15,800 feet and is the most unlikely spot for a camp one will find in any mountain. There is only one level piece of ground at Chakchu, a spot big enough for a couple of sleeping bags. There we put the kitchen. Rahul and I scrambled down a cliff and found, about a hundred feet below the ridge, a small shelf big enough for two bedrolls. This bedroom of ours had the shelter of an overhang of granite rock gaily painted with lichens. Below us was a yawning pit several thousand feet deep that ran to the Tsarap River. Great jagged peaks dominated the skyline to the south and west. Tremendous chasms that grew in depth with lengthening shadows twisted and turned for miles on end where drainage of thousands of years had cut through rocks and sediment.

Not far below us a clear, cold stream dropped off a cliff and spattered the trail with a soft spray. It was the reason why Chakchu was a popular camp site. There was indeed no other good water for miles and miles. Chakchu was much used, carrying the black scars of many campfires.

We made camp early and then sat on our perch watching every movement of life in the vast canyons below us and on the high peaks above. A horned lark visited us—a bold bird, gray underneath and white on top, with two pointed tufts of black feathers above the eyes. Two huge, coal-black Tibetan ravens and an eagle with an eight-foot spread caught currents of air as they swooped below us and sailed gracefully into the void, looking with sharp, cold eyes for carrion. A finch with a black head hopped along the ridge, flying short distances, and feeding as he went.

There was no noise, no wind, not even a humming of the *dama* bush that colored the slopes with dark green splotches. There was solitude so deep one could almost hear his thoughts. This was a place so far removed from all my people and my problems, it seemed I was in another world. It seemed I sat in the heavens apart from the earth. It seemed that Chakchu was the place where man could best come to know his relations with his God, his relations with the diverse forces and powers within himself that produce discord where harmony is needed.

I sat for perhaps an hour lost in these thoughts, when my eye caught a movement along the trail below me. The trail cut a thin white line in the side of the mountain for a mile or so until it disappeared around a gargantuan shoulder of rock thrust out into the canyon. The figure was a man with a pack on his back. In ten minutes or so he was at the waterfall below us, making camp and starting a small fire with the *dama* bush which he rooted up with his hands from the canyon wall.

In another ten minutes a woman turned the bend on the trail and shortly joined the man. She too had a pack; and after resting a moment she untied it, pulled out a kettle and some food, got water from the cliff, and started supper. In perhaps a half hour another woman appeared far down the trail. She was long in coming, for she stopped every fifty feet or so and rested. She too had a pack, and as she got nearer I noticed that it pressed heavily on her. When she rested she sat on the high bank bordering the trail, leaned forward, shifting the weight of the pack, and rested her head on her hands.

Before the second lady reached the waterfall, another man appeared far down the trail; and when these two joined the other couple, I went down for a visit.

Tibetans usually look younger than they are. To me the two men appeared to be in their late thirties or early forties. The younger

woman, short and stocky with a square, pleasant face, looked thirty-four. The other lady, who had lost many of her teeth and had a deeply wrinkled face toughened by sun and storm, was well over seventy. She wore heavy trousers and a skirt which was part of a black wool dress with long sleeves. These clothes were heavy, for they served not only as protection against the weather, but as night clothes too. She had a moccasin-type shoe made of sheepskin, and over her shoulders she wore a shawl of the same material, which protected her back from the rain and served as a pillow or covering at night. It was the only blanket she had. To this point the old lady and the young one were dressed alike. But the old lady, unlike the younger one, had a distinctive headdress known as the *perakh*. A *perakh* is a piece of leather six or eight inches wide and about two feet long that is worn on the head. It runs from the forehead down the back of the neck to the shoulders. It is inlaid with stones, usually jade and turquoise. The Queen of Ladakh (who is titular only now that Ladakh is a part of Kashmir) is reported to have the most valuable *perakh* in this part of the world. But the one worn by the old lady at Chakchu seemed fancy enough. Its jade and turquoise were not polished, but they were well proportioned. Some were as large as fifty-cent pieces, some the size of quarters; others were circular and still others were cut into odd and irregular shapes.

The old lady also wore huge side flaps made of black wool, which looked like gargantuan ear muffs and stood out like sails. From a distance they made the woman look like a wolf. The *perakh* and the side flaps are typical Ladakh headdress. I never traced the origin of the *perakh*. But legend has it that the side flaps go back to articles designed for an ancient queen of Ladakh who had the earache. The flaps not only cured the earache; they proved to be so decorative that they became part of the conventional headdress.

I no sooner reached the camp of these Ladakhis than the old lady lay on her side and started to moan. I inquired if she were ill. She was; so I sent Man Das up to our camp to fetch my medical kit.

While he was gone I made my diagnosis. The old lady had perhaps a degree or two of fever and a splitting headache caused, I believe, by her supreme exertion at high altitudes under a burning sun. This old woman, her daughter, her son-in-law, and her neighbor lived near Leh. Last June, as soon as the passes were open, they started on foot to Manali, a trek of about 240 miles.

“Why did you go?” I asked.

“To do some shopping and to visit friends.”

“Did you reach Manali?”

“Yes, and now we are returning home.”

“How long will it take you?”

“Perhaps a month.”

“What did you buy?”

“Talcum powder and hair oil.”

I reached over and picked up the old lady’s pack. It weighed at least forty pounds. I tried to lift the young lady’s pack with my right hand, but I couldn’t without an extreme exertion, for it weighed at least eighty pounds.

The old lady had climbed from 6,400 feet to 15,800 feet to reach Chakchu. She still had to climb to nearly 18,000 feet with her forty-pound pack. What women, I thought! What stamina and endurance! A shopping trip almost 500 miles on foot. A shopping trip that meant hiking over the Himalayas with a pack. I particularly marveled at the old lady, for I knew that she could probably outwalk me.

I gave her one Empirin tablet and a hot cup of *gur gur cha* and stretched her gently on the ground, using the edge of her pack for a pillow. I left two Empirin tablets with the daughter, one to be taken when the sun dropped below the ridge, the other to be taken if the old lady woke in the night. She was soon sound asleep.

I turned to the daughter and the men and offered them small packets of sugar. They took them and then handed them back, the young woman saying, “Salt would be better.” They did, however, accept crackers, cookies, and cigarettes. The young woman was the first to light up. She sat by the small fire smiling as she inhaled deeply and blew the smoke from her nose.

“Do you smoke often?”

“Whenever I can get a cigarette.”

“When did you have your last one?”

“Oh, several weeks ago at Manali.”

They had *gur gur cha* and *sattu* for supper. Shortly they let their fire go out and bedded down for the night. They lay huddled together on the ground in their clothes, a piece of sheepskin under them, their arms for pillows.

My food was more nourishing, more appetizing than that of these Ladakhis. My down sleeping bag, laid on an U. S. Air Force air mattress, was warmer and much more comfortable than theirs. And yet they could outdistance me, or anyone in my camp, for that matter. They were hardened to the trail; and even the seventy-year-old lady was as tough as nails. They had precious little, but they lived to the utmost of it. They were true to the old Tibetan proverb, “Eat according to the height of your meal bag and walk according to the width of your track.”

It seemed to me that civilization had made us soft and flabby. We were fat and weak in our protective environment. We had become so engrossed in living a life of ease that we had sacrificed our health and

vigor. If we had the endurance of this old Ladakhi lady, there would be a profound effect on the spirit as well as on the flesh. Then we would regain our adventuresome spirit; then we would want to live boldly and dangerously; then we would not be caught up in the great drive for security. Security? What security has this old lady of Ladakh? What is security? Is not the greatest security the strength of the spirit?

And then I was asleep in a tiny alcove of a mighty cliff of the Himalayas, dreaming of strong, husky women who laughed and giggled at Rahul and me as we struggled to keep up with them along a tortuous Himalayan trail.

When I awoke the sky was turning gray though the sun was over an hour from the ridge. Already the Ladakhis were stirring in the camp below us. Their fire was going, and a pot was steaming. The sun was not yet on the trail when they loaded their packs and started to climb toward us. The old lady came first.

"How's my patient?" I asked.

The old lady bowed graciously and smiled, indicating complete recovery. And so I gave her the traditional Tibetan salutation on farewell, "*K'ali phe*," which means, "Go slowly."

The one who leaves is then supposed to answer, "*Kali shu*," which means, "Sit slowly."

The old lady did not, however, give me that salutation. Instead she smiled and said, "*Sawp* [which is Tibetan for Sahib], you are a good doctor." And the young lady, who had now reached us, spoke up and said, "Mother is right. We have a request to make of you. You must come with us."

The farewell was touching. These Ladakhi folks, who had carried tremendous packs on a five-hundred-mile shopping trip, had reached my heart. There was pride in my eyes as I saw them follow the old lady up the steep trail that led to La Chulung La Pass (17,000 feet).

Those are the highlights of my medical practice on my Himalayan trek. I expected a dental practice too and I had in fact come well prepared for dental emergencies. Dr. Thomas Thompson of Walla Walla, Washington, assembled a dental kit for me. I had cement to replace fillings, a supply of a temporary filling, a liquid which, dropped in a cavity, would stop a toothache for a couple of days, and fancy dental tools. And my pride and joy were the forceps.

Dr. Thompson had given me a lesson in their use. I was particularly fascinated with the lesson he gave me for pulling a lower tooth. I was to sit the patient on the ground, hold his head with my knees, and then pull with all my might. I will not disclose the technique of pulling which I was taught, beyond the advice, "Once you grab hold, never let go."

"How about Novocain or some anesthetic?"

“It’s too complicated and dangerous for your use,” Dr. Thompson had explained. “Anyway, the Himalayan hill people will appreciate your services more if you hurt a little bit.”

I boasted of my dental kit to Rahul at Manali. At night I would take out the forceps and go about camp looking for customers. None appeared. Day after day, week after week, I looked for customers.

“Budh Ram, doesn’t your tooth ache?” “Man Das, ask that man coming toward us with the pack train if his teeth don’t need pulling.” “Rahul, how are your teeth today?” These were my inquiries; and the answers were always negative and disappointing.

I became tooth-conscious. The first thing I’d notice about a man or a woman I’d meet in a village or along the trail would be his or her teeth. Once in a while, as in the case of the old lady at Chakchu, I’d see that teeth were missing. But the teeth I saw were all glistening, gleaming teeth—perfect specimens.

“Not a cavity in a carload,” Rahul would say with a chuckle. Village after village produced no dental patients, showed no dental problems. “It’s the barley they eat,” I said to Rahul. “It’s the barley that is standing between me and a dental practice.”

There are toothaches in Ladakh; and when the pain is acute the villager usually relies on the blacksmith for tooth extraction. But I found neither a throbbing tooth nor cavity all the way to Leh. I ended by presenting the kit to Dr. and Mrs. Norman Driver of the Moravian Mission at Leh, a mission that for a century has rendered a fine medical service in remote Ladakh.

One night at Leh I was talking with Rahul about the frustration of my dental practice.

“Yes,” he grinned, “but you can get great satisfaction from your medical practice.”

“I think I did alleviate pain and restore courage and confidence.” And then I added, “You’re right. I do have a new medical record, a notable one. I didn’t lose a patient.”

“Don’t boast about that,” Rahul said, his eyes twinkling. “After all, we broke camp almost every morning. You seldom saw the same patient twice.”

Chapter 15
Hemis Monastery

After crossing Staglang La Pass we dropped about two thousand feet almost straight down a mountain wall and followed a narrow, winding canyon to Gya, the first village we had seen since we left Jispa seven days earlier. Gya, with a dozen or more flat-roofed stone houses, was plain and ugly though it sat in a waving sea of lush barley fields. Below Gya the canyon widens out until in twelve miles it opens into the Indus Valley. We followed a small clear-water stream, ideal for trout, all the way down. The canyon was bleak and bare, more sterile-looking than anything Arizona can offer. There were partridge or chukar in the canyon—buff-colored like those in Persia and a bit smaller than our grouse. The walls and slopes of the canyon were being combed by goats herded by barefoot girls dressed in rags. These girls had long slingshots made of string and leather which they whirled, throwing rocks at the goats to turn the herd and shift its direction.

This clear, cold stream runs into the Indus; and at their confluence sits the bleak village of Upshi.

The Indus rises in a Himalayan basin nearly seventeen thousand feet high. Once it was fed by numerous lakes. Now these lakes are mostly landlocked and turning to salt. The Indus is a powerful stream, cutting its way through the Ladakh range of the Himalayas. The Indus is an international waterway; it rises in Tibet, flows through northern India, traverses the length of Pakistan, and empties into the Indian Ocean near Karachi. It is cosmopolitan in character, giving its waters to a greater number of races than any other stream in the world. The Indus is a legendary stream. The Tibetans call it the River of the Lion, since it is said to flow from a lion's mouth. The folklore is that those who drink the water of the Indus will be heroic like a lion. And the bed of the river is thought to be covered by sands of diamonds.

This day in August 1951, the Indus was swollen with snow water and running dark with clay. It poured through narrow channels with an angry roar and spread wide where the channel flattened out. Crude irrigation canals led off to fields of barley and corn. The valley below Upshi is several miles wide; and the land lay mostly unused, the vast potential of the Indus being largely untapped.

About five miles below Upshi is Marchelang, a village of a few

hundred people—a garden in a washed and rock-strewn land. At this point the Indus Valley runs east and west. A wide canyon opens to the north, a canyon leading to Tibet and China over the 18,370-foot Chang La Pass. To the south there is a small canyon or nulla. It was to that one we turned, and in a few miles came to Hemis Monastery.

Many monasteries in Ladakh and Tibet are castellated buildings perched on high cliffs and thus protected from marauders and invaders. Hemis, founded about A.D. 1047, holds no such strategic position. It lies deep in a narrow nulla which is from a quarter to a half mile wide. The canyon walls rise over Hemis three or four thousand feet to peaks eighteen thousand feet and more high. There are springs of pure cold water in the nulla; and thick stands of the Lombardy-type poplar fill the deep hollow with shade.

The main monastery building is a crude three-storied affair built in typical Tibetan fashion—low doors, rock walls, wood rafters, mud floors, and flat mud roofs. This massive building houses most of the lamas who make Hemis their home and headquarters. It feeds them in great dining halls and sleeps them in tiny cells. There are numerous small houses scattered along the nulla, residences of the Incarnate Lama, the higher-ranking lamas, and lamas who are married (Hemis is a monastery of the Red Sect, which, in contrast to the Yellow Sect, permits its lamas to marry). There is one house reserved for visitors. It lies in deep shade by a brook that runs below the main monastery building. It has one large room with a dirt floor and a covered veranda that opens on a grassless yard. The lama who greeted us took us there, and we were about to unload our pack train when the order was countermanded. We were invited instead to the residence of the Incarnate Lama.

We dropped to the creek bed and then climbed sharply to a poplar orchard on the far side of which were several low houses. Tibetans have a custom of chaining mastiffs to their houses. The Ladakhis follow suit. These mastiffs spend their lives tied by a chain fastened to massive collars. As a result of their confinement, they develop ferocious qualities. They lunge at passers-by, straining at their collars and growling viciously. There was such a mastiff on the top of the veranda of the house next to the home of the Incarnate Lama. Our coming produced a terrific uproar. The dog seemed to be almost choking with rage as he jumped at us again and again. The sight of us set up such a powerful turmoil in him that he barked the whole of the two days we were there. Every time I woke in the night he was still barking.

Since the Incarnate Lama is a young boy of eleven, there is an older lama who serves as his teacher and *alter ego*. This lama is called a Lobon or Guru.

The Lobon is a famous institution in Lamaism. The Incarnate Lama is always a young boy who is trained by the Lobon. During the minority of the Incarnate Lama, the Lobon is regent. He is, in other words, head of the monastery until the Incarnate Lama comes of age. His authority is supreme in temporal and spiritual matters. He is also master of his pupil. He teaches the Incarnate Lama the Scriptures, or Buddha's sayings (of which there are 108 volumes), and then the Commentaries (of which there are 225 volumes). The Lobon is with the Incarnate Lama day and night, training him in the mysteries of Lamaism, speaking for him, acting in his stead, prompting him, and keeping him under constant surveillance. In Lamaism beatings of pupils by teachers are common. Even an Incarnate Lama can be beaten by his teacher. But when that happens, the teacher prostrates himself before the student to show there has been no disrespect of the person. And then the student prostrates himself before the teacher, thanking him for the punishment.

The Lobon met us at the entrance to the garden of the Incarnate Lama's house. He was sixty or more, a learned, devout man named Ngatun Phuntzog. His full, round face was beaming as he greeted us. His eyes are deep-set and lively. He has a thin, silky mustache and a skimpy beard. His voice is a deep guttural. His hair is gray and thin. He wore the heavy dark red gown, which gave the effect of a bathrobe, the red girdle, and the red sandals of the lamas of the Red Sect.

While Budh Ram and Man Das were sorting the baggage, Rahul and I sat on the porch with Phuntzog. The porch opened on a walled garden green with grass and fringed with poplars. From one side wall a small cataract poured through a pipe, filling the place with music. All else was quiet except for the barking of the chained mastiff.

A dark, swarthy man in his forties, wearing the long, red robe of the lamas, brought *gur gur cha*. His face and head were Mongol. He was barefooted. His black hair was long and unkempt; his skin was dark and grimy; he was the picture of the man who never bathed. In Ladakh, as in Tibet, the monks of a monastery are in various callings —from high priests to gardeners, to cooks, to coolies. This man in lama dress was apparently a novitiate in the monastery who served as a bearer for Phuntzog. He poured the *gur gur cha* in large earthen cups; and as he handed them to us, he held a rag over his mouth (Tibetan fashion) to protect us from any foul breath he might have. The yak butter gave the tea a creamy appearance and a rancid taste. It was not tasty like the *gur gur cha* Rup Singh had made along the trail. It was indeed repulsive, something to which my tongue and stomach took an instant dislike. It was worse than any medicine I had ever taken or dispensed. I gulped half of the cup and had the uneasy

feeling that I may have pushed my stomach beyond the point of tolerance. It was touch and go for perhaps a minute. I sat back in my chair, happy only in the thought that I had met the requirements of protocol. But I did not reckon with the eager novitiate who worked from sunrise to bedtime in order to please his master and his master's guests and to get merit in the next life for himself. This man was as quick as a cat and at once took on a sinister aspect. I had no sooner leaned back in the chair, wondering if the bitter liquid would make peace with my stomach, than he filled my cup again.

This time I did not thank him. I may even have given the good man an ugly look. For Rahul broke in with a chuckle and said, "This can go on for hours."

"You mean I must now drink more?"

"Certainly."

"This evil-looking bearer can force a gallon on me?"

"Certainly," said Rahul, laughing out loud.

"How do I stop him, short of insults and assault?"

"Just put your hand over your cup."

And so I poured another bitter libation into an angry stomach and by sheer will power kept it there. Then I gripped my cup, holding it in a vise and keeping it covered with my hand. Now I was resolved to defend it to the death and to ward off this evil spirit who flitted about like a big bird with a kettle of hot tea in his hand. He *is* a big bird, I thought—a big, Tibetan raven who watches every move of every living thing to see if it is going to drop dead. Dropping dead under the evil influence of rancid yak butter and *gur gur cha* seemed to me the worst of all possible deaths.

While my battle with the bearer was going on, Rahul and Phuntzog had settled down to a serious conversation. They both spoke Tibetan; but, as is customary, a formal conversation between a high lama and a foreigner is carried on through an interpreter even though the host and guest speak the same tongue. (That is why high Tibetans talk with such low tones.) One of the Indian Army cavalrymen who had brought me my movie film acted as interpreter. Rahul spoke Tibetan to the cavalryman, who in turn spoke Tibetan to our host. When I joined the conversation, the dialogue became more complicated. Phuntzog's reply came back through three persons to me. The jokes I told Rahul were heard by Phuntzog twice. Once he laughed out loud both times. But Phuntzog, knowing that protocol required him to hold his laughter until the joke was told him officially, thereafter kept control of himself. At times he would swallow his laughter in his beard. But always his eyes would dance with merriment on the first telling. When the soldier told him the story officially, he would throw back his head in a hearty laugh. This Lobon was a healthy, outgoing person. He

enjoyed life and was anxious that those around him share in the enjoyment. He was a relaxed, happy extrovert—an ideal teacher.

We talked for perhaps two hours. He told about the founding of Hemis Monastery, the organization of the lamas in the monastery, the lama dances, the Incarnate Lama, and how he was discovered. He told how the Incarnate Lama is first taught the Scriptures—the text of what Buddha said—and then the Commentaries. This religious training is followed by reading, writing, and arithmetic. And when the boy reaches thirteen or fourteen he goes to Lhasa for ten years of indoctrination. Phuntzog, teacher to the present Incarnate Lama, was also teacher, as a young man, to the predecessor Incarnate Lama.

From these topics we turned to Communism, to the relation between the monasteries and the people, and to the host of problems of concern to Ladakh and Lamaism in 1951. The Lobon spoke freely and without restraint about all subjects but one. The one on which he froze was the land problem in Ladakh—the extent of the holdings of the monastery, the work of the lama who serves as the business head of Hemis, the system of land tenancy, and the rents which Hemis as landlord collects. On this subject he was silent.

Then, and at other times when there was a pause, I would bring the conversation back to the Incarnate Lama and Phuntzog's role as teacher. Near the end of our conversation, I told him about one of my own great teachers, Harlan Fiske Stone, who was Dean of the Columbia Law School when I enrolled as a first-year student in 1922. I took my first course in law from him, the course in Personal Property. When I graduated from law school, Stone was an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Fourteen years later I joined him there; and in a few years he became Chief Justice. As Chief he presided at our Saturday conferences where all the cases argued during the preceding week were discussd and voted upon. Stone, as is customary with every Chief Justice, stated each case and led the discussion on it. More often than not, Stone and I ended voting together. Sometimes we were on opposite sides of a case. Once when the vote was close, Stone looked down the table at me and said with a twinkle in his eye, "Douglas, I can understand how some of our brethren go astray and vote as they do. But for the life of me I can't understand your vote in this case."

I replied, "Chief, all the law I ever knew, I learned from you."

Stone then pounded the table and, raising his voice, said, "By golly, you never learned *that* from me."

That story delighted Phuntzog. His eyes danced with merriment during its telling, and he roared when it was finished. After a pause he said quite gravely, "In Buddhist history the disciple very often has outpointed his master." And then, bowing his head, he said in tribute

to the Incarnate Lama, “Rinpoche [*n* pronounced as *m*] will surpass me.”

Chapter 16
An Incarnate Lama

The founder of Hemis Monastery was Stagtsang Raspa, a lama who in the eleventh century came to the nulla where Hemis now stands, looking for a retreat where he could pray and commune. This nulla, narrow, secluded, and quiet, was ideal for his purpose. Willow, poplar, and alder trees shaded it. Clear, cold water poured from springs in bounteous supply. There was solitude broken only by water pouring over rocks, by wind in the trees, and by the harsh churr-churr of the mountain finch. Stagtsang Raspa spent many months in this primitive retreat, trying to make contact with his deity or god-protector (Yidam), who would lead him to the Highest Blessful State.

The lovely nulla visited by Stagtsang Raspa is no longer the quiet place he knew. It is today filled by a thriving monastery of five hundred lamas who keep the place bustling with energy. And twice a day the canyon is filled with hundreds of deep-throated echoes that seem to come from the bowels of the earth. These are the blasts of twelve-foot horns blown from the roof of the monastery to open the day at 5:30 A.M. and close it at 8 P.M. The monks of Hemis sometimes follow the example of their founder and go into retreats, taking vows to immure themselves for three years in barren, single-room houses that have no windows, no furnishings, no utilities. Here they sit in prayer and meditation for three long and lonely years. Those who complete the three-year vigil are held in high esteem by monks and laymen alike. Few, however, come out alive because of the rigors of the ordeal. Yet those who start do not turn back, for in the Buddhist world one who violates his vows degrades himself and is held in contempt by the community. Hemis, the first monastery in all of Ladakh, is still an ideal physical setting for a retreat; and over the centuries it has become rich not only in lands and other wealth, but in legends as well.

One of these apocryphal tales concerns Jesus. There are those who to this day believe that Jesus visited the place, that he came here when he was fourteen and left when he was twenty-eight, heading west, to be heard of no more. The legend fills in the details, saying that Jesus traveled to Hemis under the name of Issa.

This is a land where legends readily grow. Hindus and Buddhists are, of course, not alone in believing that holy men have made certain

places sacred. But they have a special theory about the phenomenon. The presence of holy men and the prayers they have recited have created spiritual vibrations that dominate the place. Pilgrims who go there and stay at least three nights can feel these vibrations and thus enrich their psychic and spiritual life. Many places of pilgrimage are common to Hindus and Buddhists alike e.g., Mount Kailas and Lake Manasarovar in Tibet. These places usually have a presiding deity and many dozens of demigods. There are said to be about 500,000 deities around Mount Kailas alone. But only the pious can see them. These gods are mountain gods, river gods, tree gods, family gods, field gods, house gods. They are the gods and spirits of the ancient religions on which Buddhism became engrafted. They and Buddhism have today been mixed in a religion which Buddha himself would hardly recognize.

Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama), whose home was in Nepal, lived from about 560 B.C. to about 480 B.C. He designed a beautiful religion, a religion more intellectual than emotional, one that made wisdom its main faith and righteous conduct its code. Buddha taught the "Noble Eightfold Path": (1) right views; (2) right aspirations; (3) right speech; (4) right conduct; (5) right livelihood; (6) right effort; (7) right mindfulness; (8) right rapture. This philosophy demanded (1) freedom from superstition; (2) noble thoughts worthy of the intelligent man; (3) speech that is truthful and generous; (4) conduct that is honest and peaceful; (5) actions that bring no injury to any living thing; (6) self-control that subjects the passions to control by the mind; (7) a mental attitude of active watchfulness; (8) deep meditation on the principles of life.

Buddha's tenets were based on the notion that the cause of all suffering is desire and that desire results from ignorance. Buddha believed in life after death, or rebirth. The Hindu belief in rebirth preceded Buddha in India. Man does not die; his soul merely leaves his body and moves on to take possession of another body. One can, by his acts and mental attitudes, become reborn into a higher and nobler form; or he can debase himself and return to earth in a lowlier condition. He can, unaided, effect his own deliverance and gradually, in successive reappearances on this earth, attain the status of an Arhat or perfected man. This, briefly, is the doctrine of reincarnation. Every event is the result of prior causes and itself the cause of future events. What is done in this life shapes what happens in the next. One who lives a life of good works and good thoughts will move in the next life one step closer to Nirvana. But one who violates the teachings of the "Noble Eightfold Path" will in the next life move down the ladder; then he will have to start over and regain the ground he has lost in his struggle toward perfection.

This, in barest summary, was the teaching of Buddha; and it became the main religion of India for the four centuries beginning in 300 B.C. Later it became corrupt and in India was supplanted mainly by Hinduism and by the faith of Islam. Buddhism moved south, east, and north. By 243 B.C. it had come to Ladakh and by A.D. 400 was the established religion there. It gradually spread north, going to Tibet about the middle of the seventh century. Meanwhile Buddhism, as Bell in *The Religion of Tibet* shows, had absorbed much of the magic, mythology, rituals, and metaphysics of Lamaism and became clothed in garments that Buddha himself would not have recognized. But the central core of the religion was intact—the "Noble Eightfold Path." And the doctrine of reincarnation, originally derived from Hinduism, continued to flourish.

But the doctrine of reincarnation took a special twist in Tibet. In the fifteenth century it was especially adapted to maintain the authority of the priesthood and perpetuate the power of the lamas in a peaceful way. The theory was developed that each Grand Lama was at once reborn in order to resume his life's work. The soul of the deceased lama took possession of a boy born shortly after his death. The problem was to identify the boy, raise him in the faith, keep his power in a regency until his maturity, and then turn over the power to him. The line of authority thus became clear. There was now no longer any contest among ambitious lamas who wanted to be spiritual leader of all Buddhism. The discovery of the baby to whom the soul of the deceased had passed answered all the questions and settled all the quarrels.

By the year 1542 this system had been adopted in Tibet for selection of the Dalai Lama. And it then became the method for determining the succession of spiritual sovereignty throughout the various lower echelons. The head of every monastery became an Incarnate Lama, who was the reincarnation of the holy man who had originally established the monastery. That is what happened at Hemis. The boy of eleven with whom we stayed at Hemis is the sixth Incarnate Lama of Hemis, the reincarnation of Stagtsang Raspa, who founded the monastery. And Phuntzog, his teacher, finally told me the secrets of his discovery.

The boy is short for a lad of eleven. His face is Mongol—sensitive, expressive, with eyes that are quick and alert. His hair is black and close-cropped. He wears shoes turned up at the end, a dark red robe without sleeves, and a yellow shirt. He came out to greet us as we sat on the porch talking with Phuntzog. Rahul, a devout Buddhist, touched the boy's feet with his hands and gave him the salutation reserved for an Incarnate Lama, "Peace be with Thee, Most Blessed One."

The boy sat for a while and joined in the conversation. But his participation was at a very formal level, as is all his discourse with strangers during the regency. I asked, “What books are you studying now?”

He murmured an answer which was audible only to his Lobon, who then addressed the Rinpoche’s answer to us. The boy stood stiffly for a minute or so and then turned and ran into the house. The windows of his room had small panes, which were covered with cloth and isinglass and opened on the porch. Soon I saw one of them swing open and Rinpoche’s head come out. As soon as he saw me watching him, he ducked back. Over and again it happened, the Rinpoche peeking as any eleven-year-old would do to see what was going on, who these strangers were, what they wore, and the like. Soon he raced across the porch after a tiny dog, caught up with it, gave it a healthy kick, and then raced back across the porch into the house.

Rinpoche had one intimate playmate, a novitiate in his teens, who came out of the house with the boy. This playmate was a tall, gangling chap with heavy eyebrows and dark, matted hair cut close. His red robe came only to his knees, and the toes of his bare feet looked like talons. Rinpoche gave him an order, and the young man raced into the garden, where Rinpoche’s toys were scattered on the lawn—a tin airplane, a jumping jack, and a bow and arrow. He came flying back with the airplane, and Rinpoche held it in his hands, rushing about making a noise like a dive bomber. Then he disappeared with his companion, and I did not see him again until Rahul and I were eating our evening meal.

The house had a central hall that ran its length. My room was on the right as one entered, Rinpoche’s on the left. The door to the room was a heavy drape that hung to the floor. My room was unadorned except for a small table, a few chairs, and a carpet. The toilet was in a detached, primitive outhouse in the rear. Rahul and I laid our bedrolls on the floor and unpacked our duffel, and a lama brought hot water in a basin for washing. Another lama brought food from the kitchen. It was an orthodox Buddhist meal, strictly vegetarian in accord with the teaching of the Gautama that no man should kill any man or animal—not even sheep for mutton, cattle for beef, or trout for fish. Our dinner consisted of beans, potatoes, and corn, cooked together in a highly spiced dish, boiled rice, *chapattis*, and *gur gur cha*. And as the grimy lama served us, he held a cloth over his mouth.

Previously, while we unpacked, I had seen the curtain covering our doorway move. Looking up, I saw Rinpoche disappear. He had been watching us. In a few seconds he peeked again, his eyes wide with excitement as I inflated my air mattress. He disappeared every time I looked at him. Then curiosity got the better of him, and at last he

stood inside the room, feasting his eyes on all our equipment. He appeared over and again as we ate the frugal evening meal, his friendly face showing for a brief second in the doorway, his eyes dancing with merriment, as if he were playing a game with us.

The next morning I paid an official call on Rinpoche to tender him presents. As Lowell Thomas, Jr., describes in *Out of This World*, the customary present that a guest gives his Tibetan host and that a host in turn gives his guest is a white scarf, which signifies the purity of friendship. That is true in Ladakh as well.

The day we left Hemis the Lobon summoned Rahul and me, and as I stood before Rinpoche with outstretched arms, he descended from the dais and placed a white silk scarf across them. I then placed the scarf around my neck. The Lobon presented me with a package of tea. The same gifts were presented to Rahul in the same ritual.

I did not, however, have a white scarf (*kathak*) to present. The gift I wanted especially to give was a fishing outfit. I had a fine, steel telescopic rod with a light reel, nylon fine and leaders, dry flies, wet flies, and bait hooks. This, I thought, was the ideal gift for a boy, especially a boy who lived in remote Hemis, days and days of travel from the nearest city where such luxuries might be obtained. I inquired of the Lobon if that gift would be fitting. After weighing my question an appropriate minute he said no. Buddha's teaching was not to take life. All life became sacred, the beasts of the field and the fish of the rivers included. The Lobon thought that if Rinpoche were to be raised in the Buddhist philosophy he should not have a fishing outfit.

"It might tempt him to catch fish," he stated.

"Tempt him?" I said, turning to Rahul. "It would create an irresistible impulse." And so I tendered less disquieting gifts: dried milk, sugar, candies, raisins, plastic spoons, tins of jam, crackers, and, to the special delight of Rinpoche, an air mattress.

It was an interesting and simple ceremony. Rahul and I took off our shoes and entered Rinpoche's room. He was seated on a dais, his back to the window. The Lobon, Phuntzog, sat on cushions below the level of the dais and to the left of the Rinpoche. I presented the gifts one at a time, handing them to the Lobon, who in turn gave them to my host, explaining each time what they were. The little fellow's eyes danced with excitement with each gift; and he was almost beside himself when the air mattress was presented, and at once insisted to the Lobon that he sleep on it that very night.

That afternoon after I had presented my gifts to the Rinpoche the Lobon invited Rahul and me to attend Rinpoche's prayers. Rinpoche has two prayer meetings daily. The lamas of the monastery have three. They are held in the chapel. Rinpoche, during his minority, holds his prayer meetings in his room.

Rahul and I, our shoes off, sat on the floor facing Rinpoche. He was on a dais opposite us, his back to the window. Phuntzog sat on cushions against the wall to the left of Rinpoche. Next to Phuntzog sat two lamas. Against the wall to our left and facing the Lobon was the teen-age acolyte who was the playmate of Rinpoche.

A drum about two feet in diameter stood on a pedestal before the Lobon, and attached to the drum were cymbals. A small bowl of corn was at the Lobon's knees. Each of the lamas on his left had a large Tibetan trumpet. The acolyte across the room had a horn shaped like a hunting horn but made of silver. Before each person was a typical Tibetan prayer book—a collection of sheets of paper about six by eighteen inches, unbound, and held between two long, narrow boards.

On a low stand in front of Rinpoche was a gold *dilbu* or bell (female symbol of wisdom); a gold *dorje* or thunderbolt about six inches long, solid in the middle and slightly bulging and open at the ends (male symbol of method); and a feather duster in a holder.

The Lobon played the cymbals and beat the drum with a stick bent in the shape of a huge question mark. The two lamas blew on the trumpets; and the young acolyte tried to outdo them all by vigorous management of the silver hunting horn. The music filled the room with a deafening sound, for the space was small, not more than fourteen by eighteen feet. It was a rather monotonous chant, a simple tune played over and over again for an hour and a half. With the music came the prayers. Sometimes the prayers would cease while the music went on. Sometimes the music would cease while the prayers continued. But for the most part the prayers were read to the accompaniment of the music. Once in a while Rinpoche would ring the gold bell with his left hand or with his right hand take the feather duster out of its holder and then put it back. Once in a while the Lobon would toss a few grains of corn across the room in front of Rinpoche.

These were incidental. The main effect was in the music and the chanting. It was an almost magical effect. The beating of the drum and the cymbals, the sound of the trumpets and the horn became a primitive exercise and stirred something deep inside me. It seemed that these musicians were trying to call out the devils in all of us. Then came the incantations in pursuit, driving harder and harder, faster and faster, unending in their effort to suppress the evil forces. The voice of the Lobon was deep in bass. His words poured in a mad rush of syllables to form recitations almost unintelligible. On and on he went, supplying greater and greater emphasis. His deep voice rose and fell—rising in supplication, falling to a whisper, mounting to indignation, dropping to humble praise. Over and over again went the refrain.*

There was something at first harsh and repelling in the music. Then the horn and trumpets, though louder than any of the instruments, somehow faded to the background of consciousness. The cymbals, too, seemed to come from afar. The room was dominated by the drum, the rhythmic beating, beating, beating. And with the beating, beating, beating of the drums came the chant of the Lobon—deep and guttural, up and down, sad and plaintive, loud and demanding, soft and pleading.

It was a hypnotic ritual. The words seemed to be meaningless incantations, falling from the lips of the Lobon in indistinct guttural sounds. The words and the drum set up curious vibrations and cast a spell. Many times I have had the experience of being lost in the music of a symphony, carried away on clouds to worlds remote from the hall or library where I sat. This prayer meeting was different. This music and chanting were holding a man, drawing him like a magnet, pulling him into a strange, psychic vortex until he was swallowed by the beatings of the drum and the chanting of the Lobon.

I had read Forman, *Through Forbidden Tibet*, and his account of how sorcerers one day had conjured up before him and a group of lamas Yama, the King of Hell, and the attendants at Yama's court—Lust, Greed, and Anger. Forman with his own eyes thought he saw Yama, with his thirty-four arms and nine heads and a garland of human skulls about his shoulders. Perhaps he experienced mass hypnotism. Perhaps it was human television.

I had no such experience. But as I sat in Rinpoche's room with my head bowed and my eyes closed, listening to the beating of the drum and the incessant, liquid mutterings of the Lobon, I knew at once that hypnotism was real. I felt the power of music and the human voice and for the first time knew its vast potentiality. Though there was some force fastening itself onto me, I did not try to rebel. For an hour or more I submitted to its decree.

In the name of the Triad! O divine Lord, Mun!
In the name of the Triad! O Lotus-bearer, Hun!
In the name of the Triad! O Scepter-bearer, Hun!

In the name of the Triad! O immortal Being, adoration!
In the name of the Triad! O wrathful Vajra, flame-necked, hu-lu!—hu-lu!—hun!—Phat!

In the name of the Triad! Universal Wisdom, adoration!
In the name of the Triad! Ah! Teacher of Supreme Intelligence, Holy-one, Hun-hun!

O Mani, Mani, Great Mani, SAKYA-Mani, adoration!

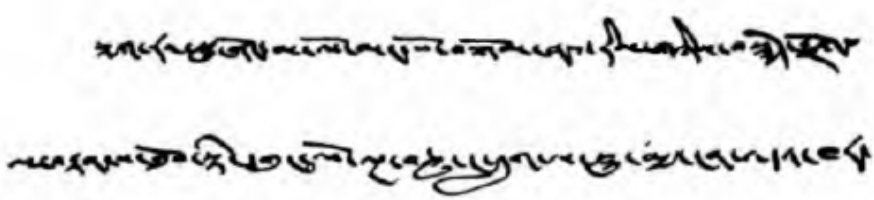
O Lotus-bearer, hun!—*O fierce and greatly angry*, Hun-phat!

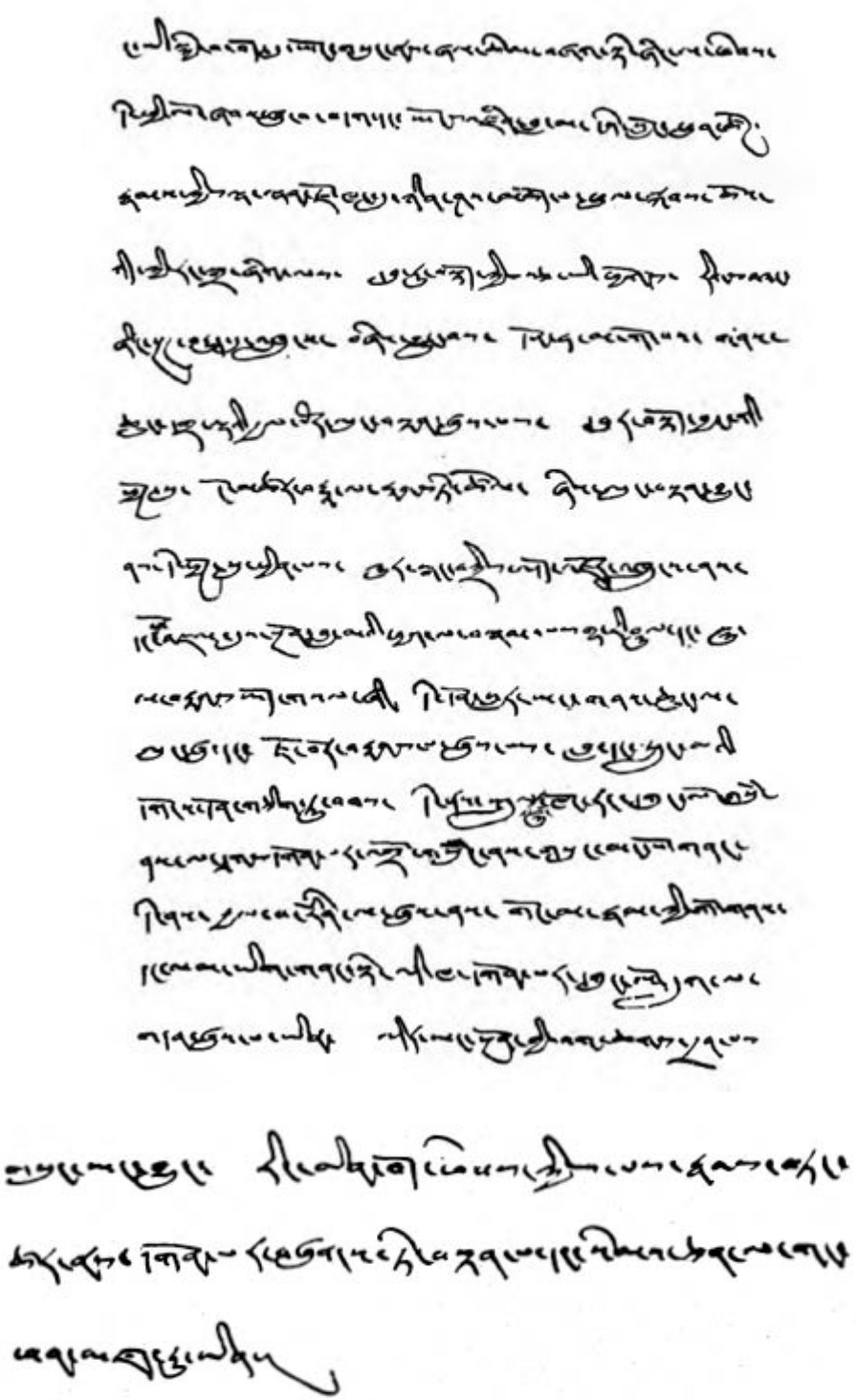
O Pleasure, Pleasure, Mighty Pleasure, adoration!
O Intellect, Intellect, Understanding, adoration!
O MAITREYA, Maitreya, Great Maitreya, venerated Maitreya, adoration!
O Divine Lord, Mun! *O Lotus-bearer*, hun! *O Scepter-bearer, hun!*

This was the chant. Over and over, on and on, it went. It had a primitive rhythm, an incessant beat that held me. It was the music of a trance, an incessant repetition whose monotony produced a numbness. The noise of the orchestra filled the room. But it was mostly the Lobon that I heard—the deep, musical bass of Phuntzog. And high above his voice was the piping tenor of Rinpoche, coming lightly along behind the measured beat of his teacher.

After an hour or more I looked up. The chant was still in progress, the drum and cymbals still beating, the horns blaring. The Lobon was bowed in prayer, his lips barely moving as the guttural sound poured out. Rinpoche was as alert as a bird teetering on a rock. He kept up with the chant, his shrill voice now carrying above the Lobon's. As he chanted he weaved slightly to and fro. And all the while he kept peeking out the window where Rup Singh and Budh Ram were standing, watching the ceremony. And Rinpoche seemed to be telling them with his eyes that he hoped to get this business over with soon and come outdoors and join them.

The morning of the day we left Hemis I induced Phuntzog to tell me the story of the discovery of the Rinpoche; i.e., how the soul of Stagtsang Raspa was traced to this boy. He went into his room and was gone an hour or more. When he returned, he handed me the following manuscript in Tibetan script which he had prepared; and he recited it on my tape recorder.





A free translation of this account is as follows:

> "The last Stagtsang Raspa told the senior lamas of his monastery [the Hemis Gonpa], when he was over fifty years old, that he was soon going to leave this world and that they should look for him in his new life after a few years' time somewhere in Tibet. Two years after 'the retiring of Raspa to heavenly fields,' the personal attendant of our Rinpoche and I, Ngatun Phuntzog, visited the Lhasa oracle, who told us vaguely of the rebirth of Raspa to a noblewoman who lived in the middle part of the U province of Tibet, a little to the northeast of Lhasa. After finding the family, we learned that the child Raspa began to say 'Ladakh, Ladakh' soon after he was reborn. The Gelung and I saw a sign on his left wrist which we recognized to be the sign of the watch of our last Rinpoche. We recognized the scar of a boil on the back of his neck and other familiar signs on the person of our Master. And when we told his noble parents that their child was the reincarnated Raspa, whom we had come to take to Ladakh, they gladly agreed to our request. When we returned to Lhasa, the Netchung [the oracle] approved our discovery of our Rinpoche. The Gyawa Rinpoche, the Dalai Lama, blessed the two-year-old Raspa and permitted us to take him out to our monastery in Ladakh. When we returned to Hemis, the present Raspa recognized the main gate of the monastery, the entrance to his personal rooms, etc. We installed him here at the age of six years and have been blissfully happy in the return of our Guru to Hemis."

Phuntzog talked at length about the discovery. He said that the soul usually wanders two years before it decides what life to enter. Two years from the date when an Incarnate Lama passes to heavenly fields is, therefore, the critical date. The high lamas of the monastery then go to the oracle at Lhasa and say, "Two years ago on this date, this man retired to the heavenly fields. What life has his soul possessed?"

The oracle then describes the place in general terms. When that place is found, there may be more than one baby boy who fits the description. In that event they have to make a selection. They customarily bring along some of the possessions of the predecessor. They put these on a table and bring the little candidates in. One may touch a watch and say it is his. One may inquire about his favorite hat and describe it or say where it was last hanging. The lamas may question the boys about the events in the life of the predecessor. They keep up the search until they are convinced they have found the child who has been possessed by the soul of the deceased.

I asked why Phuntzog relied so heavily on the scar of the boil and the mark of the wrist-watch band. "They are not there now," I said.

He went on to explain that the predecessor had had a nasty boil on the back of his neck and that a native doctor had burned it off, leaving a deep scar. The mark was unmistakable. The mark of the wrist-watch strap was also plain. The man had seldom removed the watch; and when he did, a lighter-colored strip of skin was plain for all to see.

That was not all. This predecessor had spoken Arabic and English. "Only the other day," Phuntzog said, "Rinpoche, who has had no lessons in Arabic, started speaking it."

"How can that be?" I asked.

"The knowledge of the predecessor is in the boy," he replied. "It has to be revived. Some stimulus has to bring it to consciousness; but it is

all there."

As we talked we walked through the vast poplar grove and came to the main monastery building. A lama sat under a tree from morning till night, day after day, reciting his prayers in a singsong way. Our passing did not interrupt him. We climbed to the rooms of the Incarnate Lama—the rooms Rinpoche would occupy when he reached maturity. These were the rooms occupied by the predecessor. His portrait, done in oils, stood on the mantel. Phuntzog turned to me and said, "When Rinpoche first came to Hemis, he asked for his rooms; and when I brought him here he kept pointing out various articles that he recognized."

We walked to the mantel where the oil portrait of the predecessor stood. There was silence for several minutes. Then Phuntzog, turning to me, said, "The resemblance of the Rinpoche is plain, isn't it?"

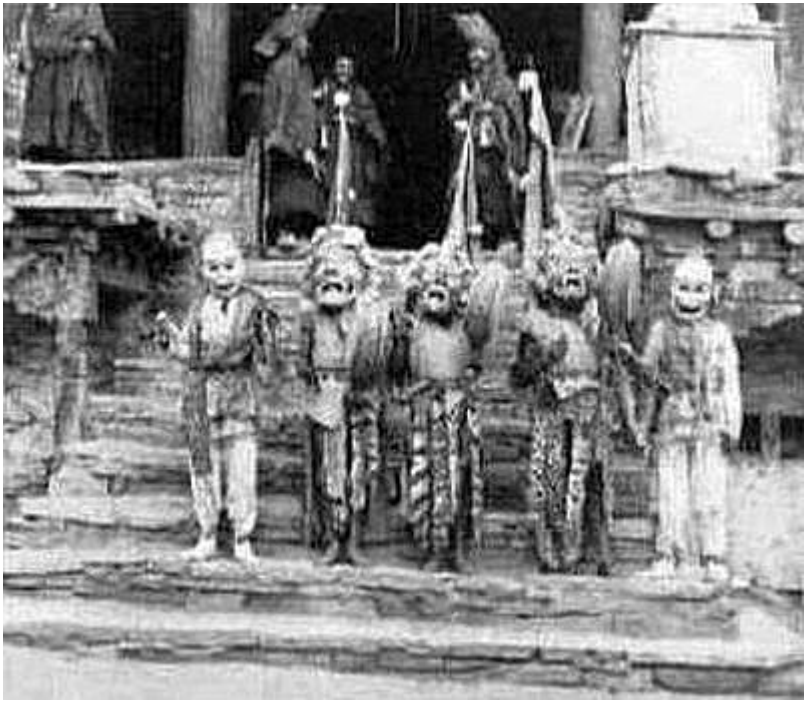
I nodded, and then I looked to Rahul and saw that he nodded too. And Rinpoche, who had been eying us closely, grinned from ear to ear and, whirling on one foot, dashed out of the room, his little red robe flying.

Hemis, the first monastery in all of Ladakh, is still and ideal physical setting for a retreat; and over the centuries it has become rich not only in lands and other wealth, but in legends as well.

The lamas put on their dances, and even the most stupid person can see Lust, Anger, and Greed in all their ugliness.

The boy of eleven is the sixth Incarnate Lama of Hemis, the reincarnation of Stagtsang Raspa, who founded the monastery.

At Hemis there are a half dozen or so prayer wheels set in the left-hand wall along rough stone steps leading down from one wing. They are filled with prayers which are repeated incessantly day and night, week after week, year after year.



The lama dancers, like the old morality plays in Europe, were a church service in the true sense of the term.

Chapter 17
Om Mani Padme Hoom

Om Mani Padme[1] *Hoom* is the mantra or devotional formula of Buddhism. In Ladakh it is repeated by all people while sitting, walking, or traveling. It is a mystic formula whose letters have a symbolic importance which I learned but did not understand. The repetition of these mystic words sets up a vibration. Some say the vibration improves one's physical health; some say it gives a spiritual benefit. I learned in Ladakh that it was supposed to do both.

Om Mani Padme Hoom—Om Mani Padme Hoom—Om Mani Padme Hoom—these are the words that I heard all the way along the 240 miles from Manali to Leh—on wind-swept passes, beside cool springs, at fords across angry rivers, in villages, beside shrines, in monasteries. These were the magic words on the lips of men, women, and children everywhere I went.

They also appeared on the *mani* walls. I saw my first one on the south side of the Himalayas between Koti and Rothang Pass. It was about six feet wide, three feet tall, and fifteen feet long. This rectangular pile of stones had been built by some lama on his travels. He had placed on top several slabs of slate and engraved on each of them *Om Mani Padme Hoom*.

Rahul told me at the time that this would be the smallest *mani* wall I would see. And it was. It seemed that the closer we got to Leh the longer the *mani* walls became. There were *mani* walls from ten to twenty-five yards long near every village. At Toche Phirche, where we camped in the rain, there was a *mani* wall fifty yards long against which we stretched rubber tarps to form lean-tos. At Gya—the first village north of Jispa—there were many *mani* walls, some one hundred yards long. And outside of Leh there was a *mani* wall fully a mile in length. It was a massive thing, perhaps five feet high and twelve feet wide. Its top was strewn with flat rocks on each of which had been engraved by some lama, *Om Mani Padme Hoom*.

One who passes a *mani* wall murmurs, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom*." And he always keeps it on his right. For there is an old Tibetan saying, respected in Ladakh, "Beware of the devils on the left-hand side." And as one passes a *mani* wall, keeping it on his right, all the prayers engraved on the stones of the wall are said for him. *Om Mani Padme Hoom, Om Mani Padme Hoom*.

The *chhorten* is associated with *mani* walls, a large one towering perhaps thirty feet or more; a smaller one, ten. It is of pyramid design, made of stones and clay, and usually whitewashed. The architecture of the *chhorten* is symbolic of the basic five elements:

> the lowest cubical part is the earth,
> the spherical part is water,
> the triangular part is fire,
> the crescent part is air,
> the moon on top is ether.

There are 108 different designs of the *chhortens*. They can be plain, simple, mud affairs, or they can be beautifully built out of hewn rock and adorned at the top with gold or copper. Sometimes they are merely a memorial in honor of a person of distinction. More often than not they are sepulchers.

I was told that sometimes the body of the deceased is placed on the ground and a *chhorten* erected over it. That is not customary, for the lamas say that the soul cannot leave the body until the body is destroyed. Cremation is preferred. The ashes are made into an image of the deceased and placed in a *chhorten*. But in Ladakh fuel is scarce. So the bodies are laid out in a special funeral service, and the lamas call the vultures. When the vultures have picked the bones clean, the bones are crushed, sometimes mixed with corn, and fed to the vultures. And the attending lamas stand as witnesses to this celestial funeral, chanting all the while, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom, Om Mani Padme Hoom*."

The *chhorten* usually contains some of the ashes or bones of the deceased or cakes made from the ashes of a holy man. They usually guard the entrance of a village or a monastery or an estate. When the departed one is a man of wealth, there will be placed in the *chhorten* an urn that contains (1) wheat, barley, rice, and peas; (2) pearls, coral beads, turquoises; (3) gold, silver, copper, iron; (4) rolls of prayers and holy writings; (5) pieces of juniper and sandalwood—red and white.

And when travelers reach the *chhorten*, they keep it on their right, chanting as they go, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom*."

Lamas often have special services in which they walk around *mani* walls and *chhortens*. They walk in single file, with flutes and trumpets blowing. They always walk clockwise around *mani* walls and *chhortens*, and as they walk they chant in unison, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom, Om Mani Padme Hoom*."

The prayer wheel is a small cylinder on a stick that is whirled with a twist of the wrist. It has prayers inside, prayers written on cloth or paper. And outside and inside are printed the words, *Om Mani Padme*

Hoom. The wheel must always be turned clockwise. I saw my first prayer wheel just over Baralacha Pass as we were following the small Yunan River down to Kilung, A Tibetan who was bringing a caravan to Patseo twirled it as he followed rangy mules loaded with wool and marmot skins. And as he twirled it, he kept murmuring to himself, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom*."

In the main monastery at Hemis there are a half dozen or so prayer wheels set in the left-hand wall along rough rock steps leading down from one wing. They are perhaps eight by eighteen inches and filled with prayers. They too are engraved with *Om Mani Padme Hoom*. One spins them clockwise as he goes up or down the stairs, waiting, in case another has preceded him, until the earlier spin has ended. And as each spins, he murmurs, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom*."

Some prayer cylinders are spun by the wind. There is a large one at Hemis, about three feet long and eighteen inches wide, hitched up to paddles and turned by water. It too is filled with prayers that are repeated incessantly day and night, week after week, year after year. And the prayers say millions upon millions of times, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom*."

There are practically no doctors in Ladakh. Although each monastery will have a lama trained in native medicine who will take care of the illnesses of the monks, there is no medical service for the people. A villager who is sick sends for a lama. A child or the wife makes the journey to the nearest monastery (perhaps thirty or forty miles) and brings back a lama. The family gives the lama his board and lodging and pays him as much per day as it can afford. A man with a special attachment to the lama may turn his wife over to him for the duration of the visit. For these considerations the lama prays. He sits by the bed of the sick person for hours, for days on end, driving away the evil spirits that have caused the illness. And as he sits, he chants endlessly, incessantly, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom, Om Mani Padme Hoom*."

Buddha did not believe in mortification of the body as a means of salvation. But that belief is a religious longing deeply rooted in Asia, rooted so deeply that it cannot be dislodged. Lamaism believes in it. A lama may walk years on his knees to atone for his sins. In Ladakh, as well as in Tibet, he may do a prostration pilgrimage. He lies flat on the ground, both hands extended. He marks the point, stands up, steps forward to the mark, stretches flat again, and repeats this exercise again and again. It is common to find people doing a prostration pilgrimage around monasteries or holy places. A prostration pilgrimage of thirty or fifty miles is not unusual. It may last for weeks. One may do it for his own salvation—to get merit by sacrifice—or he may be hired to do it for another person or for the soul of a friend or

relative.

One day I saw a lama coming up the Hemis nulla in a prostration pilgrimage. He was barefooted, with pads upon his knees. His robe was pulled up and fastened high. His hair was close-cropped, and he was filthy with dirt. Down he went on his stomach, then up on his knees and to his feet; then down again. And with each prostration he said twenty times, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom*."

The lamas gather in the chapel three times daily for prayers. I did not attend any of these services at Hemis, but students of the subject say that the ritual is somewhat reminiscent of that of the Catholic Church. There is, however, usually the music of trumpets, drums, and cymbals. There is always the burning of incense. And as the lamas kneel in the pews, the hum of "*Om Mani Padme Hoom*" fills the place.

These monasteries observe monthly festivals and four annual festivals, from each of which they get revenue. The people bring gifts of grain, or goats, or cash. The lamas sell amulets, talismans, idols, and sacred paintings. They sell paper strips and pieces of cloth filled with symbolic figures.

The most notable of these festivals is Losar, the New Year's Feast, observed in February. It celebrates Buddha's victories over the heresies—the triumph of the true religion over infidelity. People come from far and wide to the monasteries and celebrate for days on end. There are dancing and the exchange of presents; there are prayers before images of the deities, prayers in the chapels. There is no distinction between clergy and laymen, rich and poor, men and women. Beggars kneel in pews next to the elite. And the whole audience murmurs in unison, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom*."

At the entrance to the main chapel of the Hemis Monastery there is painted on the right-hand wall the wheel of life, sacred in Buddhist symbolism. It has been beautifully described by Suydam Cutting in *The Fire Ox and Other Years:*

"The 'wheel of life' is a spoked disk, painted on a scroll. On the hub are painted a cock, a pig, and a snake, standing for lust, greed, and anger, the three vices that torment human beings. The rim is divided into twelve segments, representing such metaphysical concepts as 'sense surfaces and understanding,' 'indulgence,' and 'fuller life.' The area between hub and rim is divided into six compartments, sharply divided by the spokes. At the top is heaven, at the bottom hell. The other four spaces are devoted to human life, animal life, purgatory (tormented spirits), and titans.

"Closer inspection reveals a dolorous prospect—a multitude of pictographs illustrating Buddha's doctrine that suffering is inevitable—'All is transitory, painful, and illusory.' Life is an endless, wearisome round of rebirths. The pictographs illustrating human life, for

instance, show birth, old age, sickness, death, ungratified desires, struggle for existence, punishments, bereavements, and offensive objects and sensations. Hell is no less graphic. There are eight hot hells and eight cold ones, with an additional outer hell through which escaping spirits must pass without a guide. Each of these has special tortures to suit various crimes and misdemeanors.

"The 'wheel of life' is held in the claws of a monster who symbolizes 'the hideousness of clinging to life,' and beyond the rim is shown Buddha, who has escaped the round of metempsychosis."

As the lamas passed this scroll, I heard them mutter, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom*."

To the center of the main chapel is an altar covered with bowls filled with water and cereals. They are offerings to various gods. For the sake of prosperity, they are supposed always to be filled. I met the lama who attends them, a scraggy, barefooted man, and as he passed the altar I heard him mutter, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom*."

There are thirteen large urns at Hemis, about four or five feet tall and three feet wide. They are filled each year with yak butter by some friend or benefactor, and lighted wicks stand in the middle. Each urn is supposed to burn a year. If the flame goes out, it is bad luck. The lama who had the main urn under his surveillance hovered near, wrapped in a soiled, red robe. As I went by I heard him murmur, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom*."

In the center of an adjoining chapel is a life-size statue of Buddha, where the devout bow in worship, murmuring, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom*."

Around Buddha are images of lesser deities and of Incarnate Lamas. There is one of Stagtsang Raspa, founder of Hemis. There is one of Mila Repa, the famous Tibetan poet who lived for eighty-three years and attained Buddhahood in that span even though his early life was sinful. He had learned how to kill people by magic and for a while walked the path of darkness. Then he did penance under a Lobon (Guru) by the name of Marpa. Marpa made him build a house of stone, then tear it down and carry the stones back to where he had found them. He did this over and again, one time building and tearing down a house nine stories high. Marpa beat Mila Repa and gave him impossible chores to do in penance for his sins. Finally Marpa gave him the Initiation and the Teachings, and launched Mila Repa on a life of mortification of the body. He became a hermit in a cave on a high mountain, where he lived on nettles. He renounced food, clothing, and speech. He pondered on the lives of the saints, the causes and effects of actions, the ends of worldly existence.

This poet-saint is loved in all Ladakh. His strong face, carved in stone, looks down on the inhabitants of Hemis. It shows tremendous

concentration and an indomitable will. All who pass Mila Repa's statue at Hemis murmur, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom*."

One day while Mila Repa was moving to a new cave high on a shoulder of Mount Everest his only worldly possession, an earthen pot, broke. The loss was welcomed, not deplored. And Mila Repa, the poet, wrote:

> *The earthen pot now is, and now is not.*
> *My sole possession.*
> *By breaking it has become a lama,*
> *For it has preached an admirable discourse*
> *On the impermanence of things.*

And near the end of his life he wrote:

> *May the prayer regarding the death of this beggar*
> *Be fulfilled for the benefit of all beings.*
> *In a rocky cave in an uninhabited country*
> *There will my mind be fully content.*

The Buddhist world is filled with legends of Mila Repa. There is the story of the frightened deer being pursued by a dog and a hunter. The deer, crossing a ridge, saw Mila Repa in his cave and heard him chanting, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom, Om Mani Padme Hoom*." The deer paused to listen and was so spellbound by the spiritual vibrations that its fears were forgotten. Shortly it lay down beside Mila Repa, serene and relaxed in the spiritual atmosphere of the place.

Along came the dog, who, seeing the deer, whirled to the attack. Then the dog heard Mila Repa chanting, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom, Om Mani Padme Hoom*." The dog stopped and listened; it too became calm and serene, and shortly lay down beside the deer.

Then came the hunter, who, seeing the deer and the dog lying down together, believed the dog had been bewitched. So he drew his sword to kill the dog. As he approached, Mila Repa began to intone, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom, Om Mani Padme Hoom*." The hunter was strongly affected by the chant. He stood undecided and torn. Before long he returned his sword to the scabbard and, approaching Mila Repa, prostrated himself before the Holy One.

A lama dance (*chham*) is built around these characters—a play illustrating the old Tibetan proverb and Buddhist teaching, "There is no sin so great as killing."

Phuntzog put on some lama dances for us. But the act of the deer, the dog, and the hunter was not included. The dances we saw, like the old morality plays of Europe, were a church service in the true sense of the term.

They were performed in the courtyard in front of the main monastery building. Opposite the stairs leading down from the monastery sat the Rinpoche and the Lobon. Each of them is usually dressed in a long, flowing, dark red robe, wrapped togalike around him so that his right arm is bare. Now the left arm was bare, and a bright yellow shawl was draped over the shoulders and around the waist. Rinpoche wore a peaked red hat that had no brim but came down over the back of his neck. Phuntzog wore a big red hat whose brim flared up and stood like great sails sewn together. Rinpoche sat on a dais with the gold bell and gold *dorje* in front of him. Phuntzog sat on his right. Farther to the right was a great array of musicians—trumpeters, drummers, and two men who blew giant horns. They were bedecked in gaily colored clothes and tall red hats of various designs. The trumpets were of the clarinet type, made of wood and brass. The drums stood on edge, held four or five feet off the ground by a pedestal, and attached to them were cymbals. The drums were struck by sticks bent into the shape of huge question marks. The two horns (*shawms*) were each twelve feet long. The larger end was about eighteen inches in diameter. It rested on the ground.

The two lamas who played these horns were extraordinary men. To be able to blow the horns at all seemed to me remarkable. The fact is that one man cannot blow one horn for many consecutive seconds. That means that the other horn must come in and pick up the pitch where the first horn leaves it. This requires great skill, as one relieves the other over and again, hour after hour, while the orchestra drones on and on.

It takes hours to present the lama dances. The pageantry is superb; the story, exciting; the plot, simple; the moral, plain. They have been described by Ted Shawn in *Gods Who Dance*. The characters were all masked. Some wore masks of people; others wore masks of lions, stags, oxen, and yaks. These masks—carved from solid blocks of wood and colored with a glossy and brilliant enamel—usually had grotesque expressions. Their hideous features, their terrifying grimaces led early European visitors to the monasteries to call these the Devil Dances. That is a misnomer. The dancers represented the forces of Good as well as the forces of Evil. The main emphasis of the theme was the struggle between the two. After a few serious scenes, the producer of the dance changed the pace and sent in comedy relief. These were gay, carefree, burlesque-type characters. After they left, the serious took up again. Apart from these interruptions, the story marched steadily onward—Good gaining the ascendancy; Evil gradually being routed.

A triangle had been drawn on the cobblestones of the courtyard and inside this triangle there was a small black image representing a

human corpse. Dancers dashed madly around it, engaged in a foray of sickles and swords as they tried to snatch this corpse from the triangle. The lesson was plain—man is helpless and guideless; he lives among vast unkind elements of earth and sky that seek perpetually to destroy him. Only Dharma, man's good action in life, can guard him against the evil designs of the spirits.

The final act was put on by two characters representing virtue—the Stag and the Yak. The heads worn by the lamas in this dance were huge and realistic. The Stag and the Yak each had swords. It soon appeared that their main objective was the Evil in man, who was represented by a dummy stuffed with straw. The act ended with the Stag and the Yak cutting this prostrate figure to pieces.

I was dashing about filming this dance and making a recording of the music. Once I stepped close to the Rinpoche and the Lobon. The Rinpoche, I noticed, reached out every few minutes and rang the gold bell. Its sound was drowned out in the tremendous rumblings from the giant horns, the clash of cymbals, the beating of drums, and the shrill of the trumpets. But I could distinctly hear above all the clashing sounds of the orchestra the deep guttural of Phuntzog and the piping tenor of Rinpoche, chanting, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom, Om Mani Padme Hoom*."

It was at the beginning of my trek that Rahul first told me about this mantra. *Om Mani Padme Hoom* means "O Jewel of the Lotus." The lotus is the most beautiful of flowers, though in India it grows out of mud and filth. The lotus thrives in the most unattractive places; it adorns spots seared by plagues; it blossoms in an environment of oppressive poverty; it furnishes a breathless purity in yards contaminated by man and his creations.

Buddha was born in a lotus. Like it, he brought glory, purity, and beauty to oppressed and poverty-ridden people. Buddha, like the lotus, lived above his environment. He showed that the spirit of man can rise beyond the lowliest and filthiest source and find perfection even among the dregs of the earth. He showed how goodness can come out of misery, poverty, and dirt.

This is the immortal message of *Om Mani Padme Hoom*. It is on the lips of millions every minute of every hour. People who never saw a lotus chant it endlessly. Though its meaning may be lost to most of the millions who use it, in this part of the world it is the medium for communion, the symbol of reverence, the devotional exercise, the pious prayer, the sign of the cross.

I remembered that Rahul had said that holy men along the trail in Ladakh and Tibet murmured it to passers-by, that it was a greeting often given. And so it was that I used it as a salutation at Koksar. A red-hat lama was at Koksar, en route to some place of pilgrimage in

the manner of the lama made immortal by Kipling's *Kim*. Rahul was talking with him as I came up. When I was introduced, I murmured, "*Om Mani Padme Hoom*."

That night as we ate dinner, Rahul said, "You made quite a hit with the lama."

"How come?"

"Since you addressed him with *Om Mani Padme Hoom*," Rahul said with a chuckle, "this lama thinks you are a lama from America."

"Did you disabuse him?"

"Certainly not. *Om Mani Padme Hoom* is going to help us through this country."

"Just how does *Om Mani Padme Hoom* help out?"

"These are peaceful people all the way through Ladakh and Tibet," Rahul explained. "They seldom use violence. Yet they are obedient to their lamas."

"I still do not understand how *Om Mani Padme Hoom* gives protection against a ruffian."

"No Ladakhi or Tibetan would move against a stranger unless directed by a lama. And no lama will ever give the order against a visitor who reverently greets him with *Om Mani Padme Hoom*."

[1]The *d* is silent, the first *a* is short, the second long.

Chapter 18
How Many Husbands Do You Have?

Polyandry is a form of polygamy. But instead of the husband having several wives, the wife has several husbands. Ladakh is not the only place in the world where polyandric marriages have existed. But it is one of the few places where they still thrive. They thrive there despite the fact that Kashmir has outlawed them.

Some say polyandry exists where there is a scarcity of women; that when there are not enough women to go around, a social-religious institution is created enabling one woman, with propriety, to do double or treble or quadruple service. That was probably the origin of polyandry in the plains of India where long ago there were in places a scarcity of women owing to female infanticide. Others say that polyandry was introduced into Ladakh and Tibet to take care of the special needs of family life there. The man of the house customarily spends more than half the year away from home with caravans, or with sheep and goats, or on pilgrimages. There is the need to protect the women and the children during his long absences and to maintain a standard of connubial fidelity. So the wife is given protection and companionship of extra husbands. Teddy Roosevelt, Jr., who passed through Ladakh about thirty years ago on a hunting expedition, reported in his book, *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*, that polyandry served greatly to ameliorate the lot of the woman in this region. I found no evidence of that. The woman in Ladakh is the work horse of the family. When she marries she takes up the great burden of children, the house, and the fields. Unmarried women are spry, pretty, and gay. Married women are old by thirty. A few years of married life makes them bent and silent and wan. Polyandry, if designed to cater to the woman, has failed in its purpose.

In some regions polyandry may have been designed to cut down the number of babies. The scarcity of food is thought by some to have been the reason for the introduction long ago of the polyandric marriage into a few remote sections of the Kulu Valley. A related reason is sometimes advanced for the introduction of polyandry into Tibet and Ladakh. The view is that it was imported by the lamas as an instrument of control. This region does not produce much food. If the population curve were to go up, there would not be enough food to go around. Population is held in check by reducing the number of wives.

That means more food for everyone as fewer babies are born. That means that the monasteries, bulging with food, need not fear a growing discontent among the masses who starve so that the lamas may eat. The purpose, if such it was, is lost in history. But the effect of polyandry is plain. The population of Ladakh has long remained practically stationary; and the food supply of the lamas has in no way been threatened.

Another theory behind polyandry also traces to a purpose that serves the interest of the monasteries. The idea is that if a woman has several husbands there will likely be discontent and rivalry among the men. The wife will have favorites; and there will be some husbands who will not share fully in the connubial bliss. They will be apt to turn their backs on marriage and retire to the monasteries to become lamas.

All of these reasons may contribute to the invention and spread of polyandry in Ladakh and Tibet. But the chief reason is the law of primogeniture. In this region the land, on the death of the father, passes to the eldest son. That has the advantage of keeping an estate intact, of preventing it from being pulverized into many pieces. Otherwise, family units might become so small as to be uneconomic. Proponents of primogeniture say that if the estates were pulverized, starvation would be the fate of those who, even with large farms, barely keep at the subsistence level.

But if all the land goes to the eldest son, the younger ones are cast out and nothing is left for them. New land in this bleak and barren country is not readily had. There are no frontiers where untapped, fertile land can be opened to settlement. And there will be none unless vast irrigation projects are undertaken. There is no industry to which the younger sons can turn. There are precious few trades that will absorb them. The economy is almost exclusively agricultural. The younger sons must look to the land for their livelihood unless perchance they become lamas, or try to develop caravan routes, or leave the country completely.

The problem, therefore, was to keep all the sons on the ancestral plot of ground and yet preserve the old home place as a unit. If each son moved in with a wife, there would probably be trouble. Even if there were no trouble, there would be many babies and an increasing number of mouths to feed.

And so several reasons may have combined to build each generation of sons around one wife. This woman, who became the wife of the eldest son, became the wife of each of his brothers. The first-born son —whatever husband be the father—became the heir. The eldest husband is called Father; each of his brothers is called Little Father. In the eyes of the law, each has equal access to the wife and she has

equal obligations to all the brothers. In practice she may reject the husbandly advances of any of the husbands or she may demand the husbandly attentions of all of them.

But the polyandric system in Ladakh is not a pure and unadulterated one. It bows to expediency. In theory, there is only one wife. Often there are two or perhaps three in a family. The first wife may be sickly. Or she may be so busy bearing children that she cannot work in the fields. Or the burden of the children, the house, and the fields may be too great for any one woman. And so another woman is brought in as wife; and the bedroom acquires a communistic cast.

At times there will be no son to inherit the land. In that event the eldest daughter takes all. Yet, if she has sisters, they too must be provided for. And so the institution of the *magpa* was invented. The father who has no male heir looks around for a likely son-in-law. When the father finds a suitable candidate, he makes a proposition to him. If the chap will give up his family name and take the family name of the other family, he can marry the eldest daughter and their son will inherit the property. If this chap marries the eldest daughter, he automatically becomes the husband of all of her sisters. He becomes the *magpa*, the new head of the sonless family. And so when Mr. Gyalang marries Miss Dombos, he becomes Mr. Dombos.

Thus primogeniture in Ladakh and in Tibet has produced both polyandry and polygamy. These institutions today have a great hold on the people. The Kashmir government is not proud of them. The educated people look down on them. The best families in Leh do not like to discuss the problem. But the roots of polyandry are deep; they are tied to the economy as well as to the customs of the people. And behind the scenes the lamas give the system spiritual and moral support. For the institution of primogeniture has long been thought to be sound in a land where the margin between subsistence and starvation is so narrow. And polyandry is sound by the standards of the lamas, who measure the welfare of the state by the security and well-being of their religious order.

The marriage of a woman to plural husbands, like the marriage of a *magpa* to plural wives or the marriage of one man to one woman, is a simple affair in Ladakh. The relatives escort the bride to the groom's house, where prayers are read by a lama. The prayers are in part directed toward a separation of the gods of the bride's house from the gods of the groom's house. We of the West are not, in some respects, as wise as those of the East. But we do know that when the house of the bride is too closely associated with the house of the groom, trouble may ensue. We have our own terminology for the problem. The Ladakhis may be more realistic than we. They tackle the problem vigorously, though perhaps indirectly, by having the lamas exorcise

the spirits of the house of the bride and keep them from the house of the groom. They know, as well as we do, that house gods can be troublesome. What the lama does is this. He has a vase in which he puts various charms. Then, after pronouncing incantations over the vase, he breaks it and thus destroys the entrance of the bride's house gods into the house of the groom.

The marriage ceremony is simple. It is merely a declaration by the lama that the couple are man and wife. Several days of entertainment follow, with the lamas reciting prayers every morning.

Divorce is even more simple. The wife in a polyandric marriage or the *magpa* in a polygamous marriage gets a divorce merely by walking out. If the brothers want to get rid of their joint wife, the procedure is almost as simple. They merely tell her to go hence and, as damages, present her with a cow. But they must be unanimous to make the divorce that easy. If one brother wants her to stay, she need not go. If sisters decide their *magpa* is a poor bargain, they can dismiss him and present him with a horse in lieu of damages.

The wife of a polyandric marriage can get her divorce by getting up and walking out at any time. The husbands may send a horse to fetch her back. But if she returns the horse and does not come, that is the end of it. The divorce is final. The wife in a polyandric marriage, on the death of her eldest husband, can get a divorce from the younger brothers by tying a thread to the finger of the deceased and to her finger and then cutting the thread.

Though marriage is a concern of the lamas, divorce is purely a concern of the families.

This was the story of polyandry and of the *magpa* that I heard discussed along the trails and in the villages of Ladakh. But I wanted to see for myself how the institutions flourished and functioned.

I learned that the polyandry system breeds prostitution. There are in Ladakh about as many women as there are men. In Leh, which has a population of 4,000, the men and women are about equal in numbers. There are sixty prostitutes in Leh. They cater to the caravans and to the Army garrison.

I also learned that polyandry among Buddhists has increased the flow of Buddhist women into Moslem marriages. There is an ancient mosque in Leh serving the religious needs of Moslems who travel the caravan routes. Today about half the people of Leh are Moslems. Moslems are polygamous, in theory at least, and take as many wives as their economic conditions permit. In Ladakh that usually means that a Moslem has only one wife, for women are expensive there as elsewhere. Buddhist women, left out of a polyandric marriage and not choosing prostitution, turn to the Moslem men and take their Buddhist charms and good-luck pieces with them. To all outward appearances

they become Moslems. The Moslem priest makes them wear a large piece of cloth under their hats and over their shoulders on threat that if they do not do so their hair will turn to snakes when they die. Buddhist women turning to Moslems for marriage, though outwardly Moslems, are probably Buddhists in their hearts for the rest of their lives. For the beliefs and superstitions instilled by the lamas since their girlhood are not easily displaced.

I also learned that perhaps 50 per cent of the polyandric marriages are happy ones. Many are not. One *magpa* affair I ran into is an unhappy one. This is the case of the Tingzingpa family of Khalatse below Leh. The man, imported into the family to provide the missing male line of descent, is in love not with the elder sister but with the younger one. The older sister is left out in the cold. She receives no husbandly attentions. In August 1951 she was planning to leave the home, go to Leh, and marry a Moslem.

The wife in a polyandric marriage, like a *magpa*, often has her favorites. I also found an example of that in Khalatse. The man's name is Thundup Drambuchanpa. He is a disconsolate, middle-aged man with five brothers. They are married to Phuti. Thundup thought he had first claim to Phuti. After all, he owned the whole family inheritance. It was he who married Phuti. His brothers were only the beneficiaries of his marriage. They should occupy second place and stay in the background. Not so. His youngest brother, Rigzen, had taken over. He got all the attention, all the affection of Phuti. Thundup was mad, thoroughly mad. Phuti and Rigzen would not even let him eat at the same table with them. He had to wait to eat until they finished. Then he got only the leftovers, and they were cold.

"Is that just?" he asked. "Why does not Rigzen leave?"

But Rigzen, with the connivance of Phuti, was there to stay. He had taken over the management of the farm and was squeezing Thundup out.

The reverse happened to Wangyal of Leh. He was isolated, in fact quarantined, from the family life. The wife gave all her devotion to the elder brother. When that happens in Ladakh, the younger brother commonly leaves the family. Some become coolies; others seek work in Yarkand, Kyelang, Srinagar, Manali; others become lamas. Wangyal did not want to do any of those things. The new law of Kashmir declared polyandry illegal; it abolished primogeniture and decreed that on the death of the father any son could get a partition of the ancestral home and claim his fraction of it.

That was what Wangyal decided to do. He would prove to the elder brother and their wife that he could not be frozen out of his family life.

And so he went to see the Tehsildar. But that was only the

beginning of his troubles. The pressure of the village is on the side of the maintenance of the family and against the breaking up of the estate. The influence of the lamas is behind polyandry. The Tehsildar told Wangyal to go see his lamas at Spitok. He walked the six miles and walked back. Weeks passed. Nothing happened. For months he was shuttled between the lamas of Spitok and the officials of Leh.

"If I had money, perhaps I could bribe someone to do me justice," he complained to me. "But I am penniless."

"What do you plan now?"

"Perhaps I can find work in Srinagar," he said sorrowfully.

Younger sons frequently rebel. Girls about to be married to a group of brothers sometimes defy the parental command. Choskyit, who lived at Basgo, a village below Leh on the Indus, defied her father. He ordered her to marry seven sons. She pleaded and begged and eventually refused. She left Basgo at night and fled to Leh. She was disowned and became an outlaw from her family. Later she became a Christian, converted by the Moravian missionaries at Leh. Her younger sister, however, obliged and married the seven brothers.

Such revolts as Choskyit's are not common. They seldom happen in the poorer families. But these days they happen more frequently among the upper classes. A few years back, a prominent Tibetan girl, educated abroad, married a boy in Lhasa. His mother insisted that the girl be the wife of the younger brother too. She flatly refused. The wrath of the family descended upon her. So she left and was gone five years. She would not return until a firm agreement was made that she would be the wife of only the one son. Thus are the rights of women being gradually asserted in this ancient, feudal system.

I visited a polyandric family in the village of Sankar, a mile or so north of Leh. It was a family of one wife, one child, and two husbands. Dombos was the name—Stobldan Dombos being the older brother; Tashi Dondrup Dombos, the younger; Nyangyal, the wife. They were a farm family with a few *kanals* of land under cultivation. Their house is a two-storied mud-and-stone affair with two rooms downstairs and one up. The bedroom is upstairs; and I discovered that Stobldan and Tashi Dondrup have a working rule governing the sharing of the wife. The one who is demanding her undivided attention leaves his shoes outside the closed bedroom door.

This was a gay, happy family. Nyangyal, tall and thin and with languid eyes, was eager to be photographed. The brothers were glad to co-operate. The atmosphere of the home was relaxed, not tense. Both brothers were hoping there would be more children on the way soon.

I visited the Gyalang family in Leh. This, again, is a family of one wife, Nordzin, and two husbands, Phuntzog the older and Pamba the

younger. They are as poor as church mice. Phuntzog makes sixty rupees (about twelve dollars) a month running the mail down to Spitok from Leh. They have a few *kanals* of land which Pamba attends to. All of them are dressed in rags. Phuntzog and Pamba wore the typical Ladakhi dress. Their wool coats were loose, coarsely woven, and dyed red. Each had a dirty sash around his waist. Their stockings were of felt and knee-length. Their hats were a cap-like headdress with flaps on two sides that cover the ears in winter. Nordzin's dress (her only one) was a typical Ladakhi dress—coarse black wool with high neck, long sleeves, full skirt. She never washes the dress. She takes it off at night, and in the winter uses it as extra bedding. Sometimes she will hang it outside at night to rid it of lice. The day I took her picture she was nursing a child; and as the baby fed, Nordzin picked lice off herself and off the child and cracked them with her fingernails. Her hair was matted. Nordzin, about five feet eight and slight, had a flat face that was creased with care and worry and unhappiness. The faces of the children were as filthy as the rags they wore.

I inquired of Pamba why they were so poor when Phuntzog made twelve dollars a month and the garden produced all the vegetables they could eat. The answer was slow in coming, and even then it was evasive. It seems that a great portion of the income of the Gyalangs goes into the making of *chan*, the local barley beer. Indeed, one eighth of the farm production of Leh is used to make this brew. It stimulates many quarrels between the brothers. With the help of the *chan*, Phuntzog and Pamba raise their voices over Nordzin.

When I entered the Gyalang house, I began to understand the basis for the friction. It is a one-room affair. A clay stove, built by Phuntzog, is against one wall. The floor is of mud and very dirty. There are no chairs, no table, no bed. The one wife, four children, and two husbands roll up together on the floor.

There was a scowl on Pamba's face when I asked him about Phuntzog.

"He's Nordzin's favorite," Pamba complained.

"But he's gone most of the day and many nights on his mail route," I said.

Pamba only shrugged his shoulders.

Later I talked with Phuntzog. The sun was just rising over Leh, and he was in a hurry to get started on the road to Spitok. He, like Pamba, is short, squat, round-faced, and bedraggled. Like Pamba, he was full of complaints. His brother was getting the best of the arrangement, he said. His long absences gave Pamba the advantage. It was he, Phuntzog, who owned the place; yet it was Pamba who acted like lord and master. And Pamba was lazy and made Nordzin do all the work.

At the end of our talk I put Phuntzog one question.

“Phuntzog,” I said, “tell me the truth. Should a man keep one wife all to himself, or is it better that he share her with another man?”

Phuntzog looked at me for several seconds. His brown eyes were now hard, his face expressionless. Finally he muttered, “What do you think?”

And, turning on his heel, he started with his mail sack to Spitok.

Chapter 19
The Church As Landlord

I believe it was an Englishman, reporting on conditions in Tibet some years back, who said that it was a nation where there were more "crazily rich and crazily poor" than in any other in the world. Fewer than one hundred families and the monasteries own practically all the wealth of Tibet. Somewhat the same condition exists in Ladakh. How much of the land is owned by the monasteries is not readily ascertained. The monastic heads do not discuss those matters; and officials are reluctant to give out the figures. Hence I was not able to get complete figures. But the percentage of the land owned is well over 50 per cent; and it is normally the choice land. The vast majority of the 80,000 people in Ladakh are either attached to the monasteries as lamas or work for the monasteries as farm tenants.

Ladakh ethnologically, culturally, geologically, and geographically is a part of Tibet, though politically it is not. Yet Ladakh has such a close relationship to Tibet that in 1951 I heard prominent people say that if the Kashmir dispute were resolved in Pakistan's favor Ladakh would forsake India and rejoin Tibet. Ladakh has long been called Little Tibet; but it never was, strictly speaking, a Tibetan province. Commercially it had ties with Yarkand and Kashmir. Religiously it had ties to the Dalai Lama, to whom Ladakh sent an annual tribute. And thus it was politically allied to Tibet. But it was, in fact, an independent principality under a mild despotism.

It was ruled by a king who did little but collect revenues and sit in contemplation as a Buddhist prince. The Prime Minister was the administrative officer. His position was almost hereditary, staying in one family for years. Ladakh had a nobility made up of petty chiefs, each of whom had dominion over a valley or region. There were eight of these, one of them being Gya, where we stayed.

The early kings and nobles were patrons of the lamas and gave them grants of land. That was the beginning of the wealth of the monasteries. Wealth begat wealth; the rich became richer. Revenues were used to acquire new farming lands. Pious men presented monasteries with lands. Farmers who had no sons left their wealth to the church when they died. The economic power of the monasteries grew and grew.

This hold of the monasteries on Ladakh goes back to a political

maneuver by the secular power. About the seventh century the kings of Ladakh and Tibet used Lamaism to circumvent the feudal powers of local nobles. This region was a large collection of separate political oases ruled over by local families. The early kings used the church to tie all these communities together. The church, in other words, became the unifying power, growing larger and larger and becoming a continuous force until eventually it superseded not only the local nobles but the secular kings themselves. No secular power arose to displace the church for several reasons. The communities were widely dispersed; the communication between them was difficult; there were no large, local units that could dominate the rest. And so monastic Buddhism united social and political groups, isolated from each other, into one common community. That is the essential unity of Ladakh and Tibet today.

One Tibetan king tried in the tenth century to oust the church, but he failed. His name was Langdharma. He is known in lama tradition today as the incarnation of wickedness.

It was not always easy going for the monasteries. In the middle of the sixteenth century Moslems swept down from the northwest; and again about A.D. 1600 they invaded from the west. They destroyed monasteries and threw the libraries into the Indus. The Moslem rule was short-lived. The monasteries shortly regained their position. In the Great Mongol War of 1646–47 the Maharajah of Kashmir, whose troops were in command of the brave Wazir Zorawar, annexed Ladakh to India. About 1834 General Zorawar Singh, acting for the Rajah of Jammu, again conquered Ladakh for India, driving before him into Tibet about nine thousand lamas or three quarters of the monks of the monasteries. Singh moved on to Tibet and in 1841 was defeated by the Chinese, who swept down to Leh and held it for a few weeks. But they were driven out by Moslems; and, ever since, Ladakh has been politically a part of Kashmir. But in 1951 and 1952 Ladakh was insisting that it be a federated state in Kashmir, having the same relation to Kashmir as Kashmir has to India. In that way Ladakh would retain home rule.

Ladakh still has a king. I met him at Leh. He is a slight, wiry chap in his twenties and at present is an officer in the Indian Army. He still has a palace; he is still king in name; and his wife, the Queen owns the most beautiful, the most expensive *perakh* in Ladakh. But their titles and rank are titular only and have been for a century.

The lands are rented by the monasteries under various tenancy systems:

(1) The landlord furnishes the seed and gets in return three times the seed (the average yield for Ladakh is ten to one, the return on the best land being twenty to one, the return on the poorest, five to one).

(2) The landlord furnishes the seed and gets 50 per cent of the crop.

(3) The tenant furnishes the seed, labor, work animals, and water and pays the landlord 50 per cent of the crop.

(4) The landlord gets five rupees (about one dollar) for every two *kanals* (one *kanal* equals one sixteenth acre) of land, the rent being paid in cash or crops.

This fourth method is now the most common one; and whether the monastery collects cash or crops depends on the deal made with the individual farmer.

Loans and usury cut down the tenant's share considerably. Historically, a landlord advancing eighty-two rupees gets twenty rupees in interest. Professional moneylenders used to charge as much if not more. The stories of usurious interest in Ladakh and Tibet would make even our avaricious loan sharks wince.

The monasteries have done their share of exploitation, but their management of agricultural credit has usually been more humane than that of other creditors. If a debtor was hopelessly involved, the monastery would take over one half of the land for three years. If the debt was not liquidated in that period, the land would be restored to the debtor and the debt written off. Monasteries seldom allowed land to be alienated permanently for debt. Their credit system bore heavily on tenant and landowner alike. But relatively speaking, the monastery did not exploit the farmer through avaricious practices.

The liberal Kashmir government has adopted corrective measures for all agricultural credit. Kashmir now has a debtor's relief act designed to discharge extortionate debts and to provide repayments in convenient installments. It is now the law of Kashmir that no landlord can charge any interest on a loan to his tenant. And moneylenders today are restricted by law to 5 per cent on their loans. But ancient habits are hard to break. I do not know the extent to which these new Kashmir laws are observed. There are ugly stories about current usurious practices. About 95 per cent of the agricultural loans in Ladakh are repayable in kind. Monasteries advance food in the winter to tenants. Barley advanced when the grain is sixty cents must be repaid when the grain is thirty cents. Isn't repayment of twice the amount of the loan a kind of usury?

Kashmir has gone far in breaking up its feudal system based on landownership. Under its new law every landowner is entitled to keep 182 *kanals* of land. The government has taken the rest of each owner's holdings and distributed it to the tenants. In the vicinity of Leh over twenty thousand acres have passed from twenty-four landlords to the peasants. The distribution at Leh, as at other places in Ladakh, was free, the peasants not paying for the land. Nor, to date, has the government paid the owners any compensation. Whether or not they

should pay is a political question that agitates Kashmir.

Payment of just compensation, in the American sense, is impossible. The holdings were so large and so vast that it would take all the wealth of the state to compensate the old owners by our constitutional standards. Nehru and I discussed the problem in Delhi in August 1951.

"If the former owners get paid the full value of their land they will still own the wealth of the nation," Nehru said. And they would. New people would own the land. But the bulk of the revenues would still flow to the old owners.

Various ideas are being discussed for compensating the owners: payment that avoids confiscation; an annuity to the owner for his life and a lesser annuity to his children for their lives. What Kashmir will eventually do has not been decided. But in two important respects Kashmir has not touched the land problem.

It has not distributed the landholdings of the King of Ladakh, who completely owns the village of Stok not far from Leh. It has not distributed the landholdings of the monasteries. Though some twenty thousand acres were taken from twenty-four landlords in the vicinity of Leh, as I have said, nine thousand acres, belonging to the monasteries, were left untouched.

The truth is that the Kashmir law excepts these holdings from its operation. In the case of the King of Ladakh, the exception is not important, for his holdings are not great. He probably was excluded because the monasteries all around his estate were excluded. The monasteries were excluded because the power of the lamas is so great that the government did not deem it expedient to disturb the status quo.

I heard various versions of that decision. One official in Leh said to me, "If a monastery has five hundred lamas, in fairness each lama would be entitled to 182 *kanals* on a redistribution of the land. That would at times result in an increase in the holdings of the monastery."

Another official had a different view: "If the lands are taken from the monasteries, who will support them?" he asked. He went on to explain that, while the monasteries collect some funds from the people, these funds are inadequate for the support of the lamas. The people are poor and can give very little. What they do give are small sums on festival days, on marriages, and the like. There is no sustaining congregation as we know it. The monasteries are utterly dependent on the land for their support.

This official added, "If the lands are taken from the monasteries, then the government must support the monasteries. That would be bad."

"Because church and state should be separate?" I asked.

"No. Because the government could not afford to maintain the

monasteries."

The bald truth is that the lamas are a powerful political force. The position of the lamas is strong. If A were running against B for public office and the lamas sent word down that B was hostile to the church, there is no doubt A would be elected.

This hold of the lamas on the people does not result from the organized activities of the church. There are few schools for children run by the monasteries. The monasteries have instruction in philosophy, astronomy, literature, and religion. But that instruction is for the lamas, not the laymen. Children are not taken under the wing and indoctrinated. The monasteries do not exert a power over the people through hospitals, medical care, homes for the aged, and the like. They render no community service, except as they send lamas to a home to pray by the bedside of a sick person, to conduct a funeral service, or to perform a marriage ceremony.

They hold their people by fears and superstitions and poverty.

Their paraphernalia are numerous. The *mani* walls, the *chhortens*, and the *obos* are perpetual reminders to every sojourner in this region of his religious duties, of the spirits that haunt the trails, of the dangers which transgressions bring. There is the Tibetan proverb that "without a lama in front there is no approach to God." The lama is the person who has command over the spirit world, who can drive away the evil forces, who can interest the good deities in the welfare of the people. The lama has contacts with the other world. He has the wisdom and the power of the land. He can conjure up even Yama, the King of Hell, and all his demons. He can produce Yama in the flesh for all to see.

The whole weight of tradition is behind Lamaism and its power. The native Ladakhi, like the Tibetan, is illiterate. He can neither read nor write. He has no radio to listen to the news of the world. There are in all of Ladakh not over three radios.

The native, filled with fears and superstitions, gets his learning in part from paintings. The word "painter" means literally the "writer of gods." Ladakhi and Tibetan painting is the equivalent of a language where one can see in anthropomorphic form the virtues such as Mercy and Chastity and the vices such as Lust, Anger, and Greed. The colors, postures, and gestures of the figures all express ideas. The peasant, who lives in a world dimly lighted and full of scheming devils, learns about the paintings from the lamas. He first learns of devils and demons from the lips of his parents when he is a babe, from the stories his elders tell as he grows up, from the legends of pass poison, evil demons, revengeful gods that men in the caravans relate. And when he goes to the monasteries, the stories he has heard at home are confirmed. The lamas put on their dances and out come Lust, Anger,

and Greed in person. Even the most stupid person can see them in all their ugliness. Thus are the natives indoctrinated with fears and superstitions. The devils are always present; they are a factor never forgotten in the daily life of the Ladakhis. A Ladakhi burns incense to sanctify his house. He spins his prayer wheel and observes the ritual of the *mani* walls and *chhortens*. And to gain religious merit, he goes on a pilgrimage, sometimes to India proper, in search of the river of mystery in the fashion of the lama immortalized by Kipling's *Kim*.

Rahul, devout Buddhist and a prominent layman in the church, made a speech a year or so ago saying the monasteries should become educational centers, bringing in the children from the surrounding areas and teaching them. The wrath of the lamas descended on Rahul. He was severely taken to task.

"Why?" I ventured to ask.

"Because the power of the lamas is in part due to the ignorance of the people," Rahul answered. "That is the reason why Tibet has been the forbidden land. The lamas do not want ideas from the outside world to reach their people. Ideas, you know, can be disturbing."

That is why travel of foreigners throughout the whole area was long restricted. That is why lamas, fearful of the importation of ideas, would sometimes turn bandits loose on travelers. That is why, even today, the educational activities of monasteries—apart from their perpetuation of superstition—are practically nil.

Lamaism has a vested interest not only in the ignorance of the people but in their poverty as well. Poverty and ignorance, in fact, go hand in hand. Poverty is indeed the main instrument for promoting and perpetuating ignorance.

Each monastery has not only a spiritual head (the *skushok*), but also a managerial head (the *chhagzot*), and a treasurer (the *konyer*). There are two classes of monks—the praying monks and the working monks. The working monks are under the *chhagzot* and the *konyer*. The *chhagzot* is usually a lama whose main job is to supervise the making of leases of the farmlands and their cultivation, and to collect the rents. He usually rides the biggest, whitest horse in the region. When he or the lama who represents him comes to a village to collect the rents, he brings with him more than the usual power and prestige of the landlord. He also brings the power and prestige of the church. He is the holy man to whom all allegiance is owed. He is the one who holds the tenant in the palm of his hand. He may, in appearance, be a kindly man. But as a symbol he has a terrifying importance. Since he is under a mandate to keep the people poor, he can in good conscience exact the pound of flesh. And they—poor, miserable, whimpering villagers—can only bow in submission.

These Ladakhis are poor people—poor in the strictest sense in

which we use the word. They get some income from sheep, goats, and yaks. But the bulk of their livelihood is from agriculture. They are on a bare subsistence level. They commonly work per family only a few acres. Their diet has very little meat in it. The Rupshupa, whom I saw at Zara, eat milk, cheese, and meat, supplemented by barley that they get in barter for wool. But they are the exceptions. The rest are, for the most part, vegetarians. They eat barley and wheat cakes (*chapattis*), the broth of turnips with some peas in it, baked barley flour (*sattu*), fruits in season (apples, grapes, apricots), and *gur, gur cha*. They have one escape from the monotony of life—apart from the festivals at the monasteries. That escape is through *chan—a* local beer, made from wheat and barley, that looks like dirty gruel and smells like stale beer.

The Rupshupa, now that the price of wool is high, may have an annual cash income of eighty dollars a year per family. But that is far above what the average Ladakhi family will have in a year.

At Upshi, where we first touched the Indus River, we stayed with the headman of the village, Jigmet. Jigmet's house has two stories. It is made of stone and mud with rafters of poplar wood. The ceilings are about six feet high. The floors are mud. The roof is flat, constructed of rocks and mud laid on top of boughs. The cooking is done in a fireplace located under a hole in the roof. The toilet is on an open balcony on the second floor. It consists only of a hole in the mud floor. There are no furnishings in the house—no chairs, no beds, no tables. There are no decorations on the walls, no carpets on the floors.

Jigmet is the richest man in the village. He owns the land he works —eighteen *kanals* or a little more than one acre. He has no sheep, no goats, no yaks. He has one dzo that he uses for plowing. For fuel he uses the dung of the dzo and the common sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*)—a silvery-barked shrub with sharp spines and orange-yellow berries that flourishes in the valley of the Indus. He raises only barley, and he irrigates it from the Indus. He has a few chickens. Their eggs, the dzo's milk, and the barley are his income. He bragged that he had a cash income, over and above his living, of fifty dollars a year. A local official laughed at the idea. He said five dollars a year would be closer.

Jigmet wore a gray wool gown, sandals, and a Ladakhi hat. The hat, distinguished by a rim made of black fur, had a round, squat top. Jigmet had one other adornment. In his right ear he wore a big gold earring about an inch and a half in diameter. His face was sad; his black eyebrows and thick, black mustache accentuated the severity of his countenance. Yet he was a gracious host. He showed us to our room on the second floor. The room had a small balcony big enough for a sleeping bag. It faced north, and I could see miles and miles up

the Indus. We no sooner had unpacked than Jigmet's family appeared —a wife suckling a babe, a grandmother, two small boys, a teen-age girl. I asked to get their pictures in several different groupings. Jigmet directed them to comply. After each picture, Jigmet came up and, with outstretched hand, said, "Bakshish" (an Arabic word meaning a tip, which the British introduced to Ladakh). Each time I gave him or the wife or the children something—candy, cigarettes, salt. The picture taking took a half hour or so. Jigmet and the family then left. When Rahul and I were eating dinner, Jigmet reappeared. He sat silently watching us for ten minutes or so. Then he got up, held out his hand, and said, "Bakshish." I gave him some more cigarettes. At the crack of dawn he was back, saying, "Bakshish." He followed me around as I took pictures of Upshi and its people.

I worked my way through his fields of beardless barley to get pictures of the Indus River, about a quarter mile distant. Every few yards, Jigmet, who followed me closely, pleaded, "Bakshish." That word came so frequently that it rang in my ears. By the time I had returned to the house, loaded my cameras, and started to leave, Jigmet had increased the frequency of the request. "Bakshish, bakshish, bakshish" came like a chant. I had paid him well for the lodgings. I did not know what the proprieties were. Rahul said I had paid enough; so did the Indian Army officer who was traveling with us from Pagmur to Leh.

I walked up to Jigmet and held out my hand to say good-by. He did not put out his hand but said, "If there is no bakshish, there is no use shaking hands."

I took his hand anyway and gave it a firm squeeze, saying, "This is the way we do it in America. Friendship is more important than bakshish."

Jigmet stood disconsolate as I rode off on Moti. Though Jigmet, by Ladakhi peasant standards, was well off, he had not more than ten dollars a year cash income. All who lived around him were much poorer than he, held in a vicious serfdom under the monasteries. It was his duty to feed and care for every lama who went by. It was only the occasional stranger who offered him any possible opportunity to make a cash profit.

The poverty and ignorance in which the lamas hold the people of this region mean that the lamas are supreme in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. There is no revolt, not even any apparent resentment. Yet people are people the world around; and the Ladakhis show their resentment in simple, innocuous ways. It is in the form of making fun of the lamas. And one of the most dramatic ways is in the singing of a famous Ladakhi folk song.

The women of Gya sang it for me. A dozen or more stood in line,

close together. They were dressed in their conventional long black wool dresses. Most of them had on the picturesque *perakh* and the large black wool earpieces that stood out like sails from their heads. Most of them wore sheepskins over their shoulders—the skin that serves as a ground covering at night, a protection against rain by day, and a shield for the carrying of loads on the back. They were giggling as they started to sing; and the giggles interfered with the song until at last they finally settled to a serious rendition. The song is a take-off on a man accused of being a lama. The man's name is Tashiwangyal, and he is the singer.

Don't think I have no father;[1]
My father's caste is bright like sandalwood.[2]
Don't think I have no mother;
I'm like the guitar made out of the reindeer skin.[3]
Don't think I have no tongue;
I'm like the cord made of the inner skin of the goat.[4]
Don't think I am a lama;
Thang Thang Gyalpo is my lama.[5]*

**See Appendix 4, song 4*

As the women sang, they bent over until their backs were almost parallel to the ground. They shook their fingers at an imaginary figure at their feet as if they were scolding. As they pretended to scold, they swayed back and forth. And as they sang and swayed, their eyes danced with merriment. For now they were making fun of their lord and master—the one who owns their souls, their houses, their menfolk, their babies, their fields—the big rich monastery that sits like a castle on the hill.

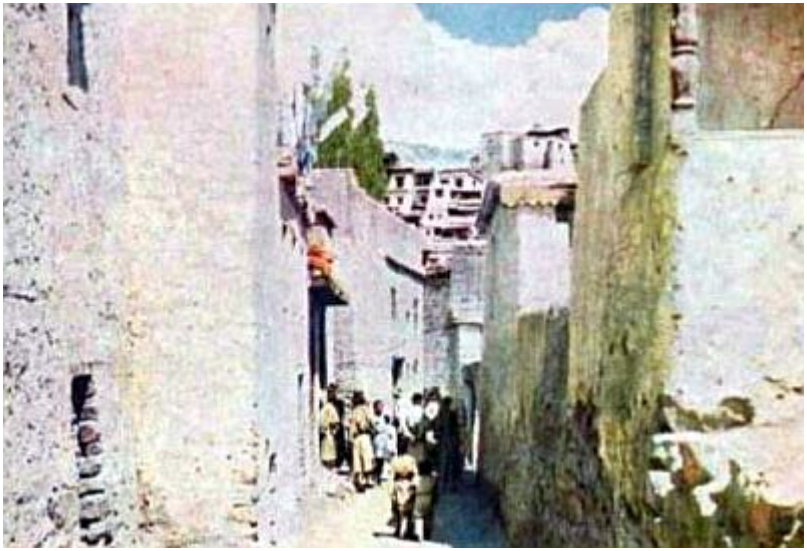
[1]A lama is supposed to renounce his father and mother.
[2]He is, in other words, spotless.
[3]He's made of proper stuff.
[4]This skin has a fine texture.
[5]He was a very superior man who built a lot of monasteries.
.

Bakula is a Yellow Sect lama whose soul has been traced back beyond Buddha.

The Ladakhis are poor people - poor in the strictest sense in which we use the word.

The castle of the King of Ladakh still stands. But it is today empty - filled with cobwebs, bats, and the memories of an ancient power that events have transferred to other hands.

Zila playing the daps and sang of love in a sad and melancholy voice.



Leh is the ancient capital of Ladakh, with narrow, winding streets made for caravans, not cars.

Jigmet, the headman of Upshi, is the richest man in the village.

Chapter 20
Communism vs. Buddhism

In the summer of 1951, the United States was busily engaged in hunting down Communists in our midst, in preparing our defenses against Soviet Russia, and in conducting a military program in Asia against Red China. While this was going on, while our sons were in training camps or on the battlefields, while our generals were seeking larger and larger appropriations for military ends and more and more laws to strengthen their hands, Soviet Russia was completing one of the most astute political maneuvers of her career. Some of the events which marked the political victory were noted in our press. But their full significance did not percolate through the military-mindedness which had possessed us. Few, even at top levels, knew and understood the master moves which Soviet Russia, acting through Red China, had made on the international chessboard. The move, although involving directly only Tibet, had a much larger prize in reach. That prize is the Buddhist world.

When the Chinese Communists, in January 1950, announced their program for the "liberation" of Tibet, they were following a traditional Chinese policy of intervention. In the ninth century, Tibet was at war with China. Tibet, the aggressor, was expanding east and west. But the Buddhist religious invasion of Tibet dramatically illustrates that religion makes a vast difference. When Buddhism became fastened on the Tibetans, war no longer became an instrument of policy. Buddha's command not to kill had profound political effects. Tibet became at times a subject nation. The Mongol Empire was extended over Tibet in A.D. 1200. By A.D. 1700 Chinese suzerainty began.

Tibet has never been a part of China, though Tibetan history, written by the Chinese, has made it so. Tibet was strong and independent when China was weak; Tibet was subservient when China was strong. Tibet has always been China's western neighbor. The boundary, which runs through vast, trackless expanses, has caused frequent disputes. The pressure of the western border people on China was often strong. China moved to a position of influence or control in Tibet in order to guard her western frontier.

The Chinese influence asserted itself in several ways. For centuries some lamas have received Chinese pensions and some monasteries

have received generous Chinese donations. China has long demanded control of Tibet's foreign affairs and has always been jealous lest some other power align Tibet against China and thus create a menace from the rear. China has long paid the salary of the Tibetan Ambassador to Peking.

China has had at her command all the instruments of propaganda. Her merchants, her books, her periodicals, her students have gone throughout the world carrying the message of China's greatness and power. That message included the word that Tibet was a part of the great Chinese Empire. Tibet had no publicists, no ambassadors free of Chinese influence, no newspapers, no method of communication with the world. Tibet, therefore, since A.D. 1700, has been largely a pawn in Chinese politics.

In the last two hundred years, China has sent several punitive armies into Tibet. They were sent to control obstreperous Dalai Lamas who were becoming too independent, who were not bending to the will of Peking. The Chinese in the period of suzerainty have thrown some Dalai Lamas in jail. They have had some Dalai Lamas murdered. The Chinese saw to it that a whole series of Dalai Lamas never lived beyond eighteen years. There was a reason for this. A Dalai Lama, while in his minority, is under a regent. The authority is then in the regent, as the authority at Hemis is in Phuntzog until Rinpoche reaches maturity. The Chinese have played politics in Tibet for centuries by murdering one Dalai Lama and appointing the regent of his successor. Through control of the regent they have kept control of Tibet.

At times the Chinese have overplayed their hands. In 1839 the Chinese Ambassador to Tibet condemned a lama-regent to exile. Fifteen thousand lamas of the Sera Monastery near Lhasa armed themselves with lances and clubs and marched into the capital looking for the Chinese Ambassador. In 1917 the Tibetan Army, under command of a lama, was attacked by the Chinese Army. The lama general won the battle and took from the Chinese a territory larger than all of England.

But the Chinese have, for the most part, maintained effective control in Tibet. And no device has helped them more than the doctrine of reincarnation. The doctrine of reincarnation has been more of a political than a divine institution. Under Lamaism the church was the effective instrument for control of the country. Native Tibetan control of the internal affairs of Tibet kept the church in the hands of the rich and powerful families. The Manchus saw the doctrine of reincarnation as the way of breaking that control. The method of tracing the soul of the deceased to a newborn babe had all the trappings of a mystic, impersonalized procedure. But the key man was

the oracle who told the lamas where to look. The Manchus saw to it that the oracle directed the search into poor and insignificant families. By selecting the Dalai Lama from new and different groups, the church got popular support; it got the blessing of those who preached democratic principles. But that was not the aim. The aim and the effect were to destroy the old dynastic power. This process was capable of endless manipulation to arrest tribal alliances, to awaken new regional loyalties, to shift the center of political favor. The Chinese used it to the limit. The general formula developed by the Chinese to control the selection is described in Bell, *The Religion of Tibet*.

The story of the discovery of the present Dalai Lama is beautifully related in Steele, "The Boy Ruler of Shangri-La," in the *Saturday Evening Post* for April 13, 1946.

". . . When the thirteenth Dalai Lama died in 1933, at the unusually advanced age of fifty-four—several Dalai Lamas have died very young under mysterious circumstances—the machinery of magic and tradition was put into motion to find his successor. It was not until two years later that the lucky infant was born in a squalid peasant shack in Northeastern Tibet. Neighbors remember now that there was a rainbow over the house on the day of the birth, but nobody realized then the full significance of that heavenly sign. In fact, the boy was already four years old when he was finally found, identified and formally installed on the gilded throne of Tibet. It happened like this:

"Searching for the right baby boy from among thousands born after the thirteenth Dalai Lama's passing, the high priests of Lhasa sought continuous guidance from their gods. They consulted the state oracle—a jovial monk whose prophecies frequently influence government policies. The oracle, while in a trance, pointed eastward. There were other signs to indicate that the new Dalai Lama would be found somewhere in Eastern Tibet. Twice, during successive nights, the body of the late Grand Lama, lying in state in the Potala, was alleged to have turned slightly toward the east. A strange, many-fingered fungus sprang overnight from the east side of this dignitary's new, gold-encrusted tomb. The odd growth is still preserved where it appeared. It is enclosed today in a glass case.

"Next the regent and his wise men visited a sacred lake near Lhasa. In its waters they discerned the image of a three-storied, gold-roofed temple and other mystic signs. The rippling image was easily identified as that of a famous temple in Kumbum Monastery, two months' caravan travel away in Northeastern Tibet. They knew, then, that the boy Dalai Lama would be found somewhere in the vicinity of that monastery. A delegation was dispatched to Kumbum to make the final choice from among three infant candidates in that region. The

priestly emissaries entered the house of the humble peasant Chog Chu Tsering, whose young son had shown 'supernatural' manifestations. Before him they laid a number of articles which had belonged to the late Dalai Lama, along with several exact imitations. This was the critical test. There was hushed tension as the infant fondled his new playthings. After momentary hesitation, he picked up a cane and a couple of necklaces. They were the genuine articles. The boy had passed. He had demonstrated his affinity with the defunct priest king. Here was the new Dalai Lama. Whatever doubt remained was dispelled when bodily examination revealed three of the five physical signs associated with the incarnated divinity Chenrezi. It took nearly a year of negotiation and payment of vast gratuities to extricate the child from the jurisdiction of the Chinese and Tibetan authorities in his home district."

The possibilities for manipulation of this doctrine within the framework of Lamaism are innumerable.

The Chinese have used not only the machinery of Lamaism in this manipulation; they have used mechanical devices as well. At times they have given the appearance of objectivity by the discovery of several competing candidates for the office of Dalai Lama. Then they put the names of the three candidates on separate pieces of paper, wrapped each one in a piece of dough, put the three in a wheel or drum, and whirled it. Out pops one; and the man whose name is in the capsule is the Dalai Lama. How they controlled the wheel so that the name of the candidate they preferred popped out is a mystery. But I learned from my early days with a carnival in this country that such mysteries are not profound. I am sure this one is not above the reach of the average pitch man.

The Chinese made the process easier to manipulate. In 1793 a golden urn was sent from China. The names of the boys who were likely candidates for the reincarnation were placed in the urn. Religious services were held, and then chopsticks were used to pick out one slip of paper. Manipulation within that scheme of things was a simple affair.

The Chinese have gone so far in their manipulation of the doctrine of reincarnation as to prohibit rebirth of a person deemed inimical to the welfare of the state. In 1882 Sing Chen helped a foreigner into Tibet and allowed him to visit Lhasa. The Chinese were displeased. They put Sing Chen to death and forbade him to reincarnate. Thus, long before the Communists came to control in China, the Chinese authorities used the doctrine of reincarnation to serve their ends and to perpetuate their authority.

The Chinese have used the Panchen Lama to further their cause of subjecting Tibet. The Panchen Lama is second to the Dalai Lama. But

in some respects—too recondite for me to understand—the Panchen Lama is "holier" than the Dalai Lama. He is a political invention of the fifteenth century—not an invention of the Chinese but of the ecclesiastical authorities who, on the growth of the political power of northern Tibet, created the Panchen Lama as the symbol of the north. But the south won out and the Dalai Lama remained supreme. Yet the Panchen Lama became a divisive influence in Buddhist ecclesiastical affairs.

The Panchen Lama has a large area of his own in Tibet over which he has control. His district is Tsang Province, where he exercises almost complete jurisdiction both in ecclesiastical and in temporal affairs. This region is his fief, and he is the supreme overlord.

In recent years, the Chinese have capitalized on this strategic position of the Panchen Lama. The previous Panchen Lama in 1924 quarreled with the Dalai Lama and left Lhasa for China. He stayed there until his death in 1937. Then the Chinese, in control of the selection of his predecessor, chose the present Panchen Lama. Up to August 1951, this Panchen Lama had never left China, had never been in Lhasa. But he, the second-in-command, sat in China urging the Tibetans to make peace with Red China, pleading with them to submit to the "liberation" program which the Communists designed for Tibet.

The objective of the Chinese Communist government in the summer of 1951 was to get the Dalai Lama under its control. He had become alarmed at the threat of the Red Army to Tibet. So he fled Lhasa, going with his entourage to Yatung, a small monastic town near Mount Everest on the Tibetan-Indian border. I had letters to the Dalai Lama and had arranged to visit him there. But before I arrived, a train of events had changed the course of history and sent the Dalai Lama north, a virtual captive of Red China.

The family of the Dalai Lama and many influential people in the hierarchy pleaded with him not to return to Lhasa. They pointed out that if he did, he would be a ready victim of Communist intrigue. The Communists would work to liquidate the system of landlordism on which the monasteries depended. The Communists would appropriate the wealth of Tibet to their own ends, robbing the church. The Communists would undercut the authority of the Dalai Lama, making him a mere vassal. The Communists would make the monasteries dependent on them for financial support; and once the Communists got effective control, the Dalai Lama and all other lamas would be mere puppets of the Red regime. There were personal reasons as well on the side of leaving Tibet. The Dalai Lama's mother had left Tibet. The Chinese sent his brother to Yatung to persuade the Dalai Lama to return to Lhasa. The brother passed through Yatung, crossed to India, and caught a plane to the United States. The weight of family

influence was on the side of quitting Tibet.

These were the arguments of friends of the Dalai Lama who wanted him to quit Tibet and go to India. There were other arguments I was carrying to Yatung to present as forcefully as possible to the Dalai Lama. There is reason to believe that the Dalai Lama understood this point of view and was sympathetic with it. There is reason to think that if he had his real choice he would have left Tibet.

But the arguments advanced against that move were powerful ones. The Chinese, who had sent a large delegation to Yatung to negotiate with the Dalai Lama, had talking points. First, it was intimated that the Dalai Lama was not the true reincarnation, that he was an impostor, that the Chinese had found the true reincarnation and were ready to install him. Second, the Panchen Lama, long a rival of the Dalai Lama, had been "discovered" by the Chinese, was pro-Chinese in his attitude, and was ready to acquit himself properly should the Dalai Lama refuse to return. Third, Lhasa had long been the religious capital of the Buddhist world. It is to Buddhists what Rome is to Catholics. The great weight of sentiment was for the Dalai Lama to return to the ancient capital, even though it would now be enveloped in a hostile atmosphere. Fourth, many Buddhists thought that if the Dalai Lama returned he might be able to unify the lamas against the Communist influence and present a solid front against Communist infiltration of Lamaism. Fifth, lamas came down from remote monasteries with pleas that the Dalai Lama should not leave the country. These pilgrimages may have been inspired by the Communists. But the thousands of lamas who appeared were doubtless sincere in their requests. When word spread in Yatung that the Dalai Lama was planning to fly out of Yatung and go to India, the lamas lay down on the airport. Hundreds and hundreds of them stayed there for days, making it impossible for a plane to land or take off. Other lamas manned the passes leading south to India.

After weeks of debate and indecision, the Dalai Lama was still uncertain. The Chinese suggested he consult the oracle. The oracle in turn suggested that he decide by lot. Accordingly, the Chinese took two pieces of paper and wrote on one "To Lhasa" and on the other "To India." They rolled these in dough, put them in a wheel, and whirled the wheel. Out popped one capsule. It was opened in the presence of the Dalai Lama. It read "To Lhasa." That decided it. The fates had decreed the Dalai Lama should return to Lhasa. Chinese manipulation had once more carried the day.

On August 17, 1951, the Dalai Lama re-entered Lhasa. Immediately thereafter the Red Chinese "liberation" army raced across Tibet and occupied key posts along the Tibetan-Indian border. On August 17 I was in Leh. That night I had dinner at the three-hundred-year-old

Sankar Monastery, a mile or so north of Leh, with Kaushak Bakula, Rinpoche of Spitok. Bakula is a Yellow Sect lama whose soul has been traced back beyond Buddha. Bakula is an important man in the Buddhist world. He is head of the Yellow Sect in Ladakh.

The Yellow Sect came into Buddhism as a reform sect. Its leader was Tsongkapa (the man from Onion Land), who hailed from Amdo, a Tibetan province bordering on northwest China. (This is the province from which the present Panchen Lama comes.) Tsongkapa died in 1419 after having cleansed Lamaism of some of its corruptness. Among other things, Tsongkapa introduced celibacy to the priesthood. It was from Tsongkapa that the practice of reincarnation in Buddhism stems. The second and the third reincarnation of Tsongkapa became heads of the Yellow Sect. But they had spiritual power only. The third of these extended the influence of the Yellow Sect to Mongolia and China. And it was the strength of the Yellow Hats in Mongolia that eventually led to the combination of both spiritual and temporal power in the Dalai Lama. The Yellow Hats met with reverses in Tibet. The Sakya, or Red Hats, were in favor with the King. The Yellow Sect was losing its political support. But in Mongolia the Yellow Sect was supreme. The fifth Dalai Lama conspired with Gusri, King of Mongolia, in the seventeenth century for Gusri to invade Tibet. Gusri conquered Tibet and made Tibet over to the fifth Dalai Lama (actually Talai Lama, meaning Great like Ocean). Since that time, the Dalai Lama has had both the spiritual and temporal power in Tibet—an autocratic power that probably no other nation in the modern world has known. Each succeeding Dalai Lama has been a Yellow Hat. And the theory evolved that Tsongkapa, founder of the Yellow Sect, was the reincarnation of the first national King of Tibet and that the latter was the reincarnation of Chenrezi, the Tibetan deity who is the Lord of Mercy. The temporal power of the Dalai Lama was thus traced back to temporal sources of power.

The Dalai Lama exercises his temporal power. Half of the regular civil service of Tibet are lamas, half laymen. The government posts are usually held by two or three men—a lama and a layman, two lamas and one layman, one lama and two laymen. There usually is no division of work; they are colleagues who act jointly; they are used as checks on each other.

That night at the Sankar Monastery we talked of these things. We talked of the great possibilities of Communist control of this highly centralized spiritual and temporal power. As we talked, we sat cross-legged on the floor in Bakula's room.

We had come to Sankar at night through rocky lanes that wound across vast barley fields. Lamas met us with torches at the high front steps of the monastery. They bowed low in greeting and then

scampered ahead as they led the way through a labyrinth of dark hallways. We climbed rough, stone steps; we passed through stone corridors where the flares cast weird shadows; we stooped low to enter doorways; we passed through dark rooms, close with stale air; and finally we emerged into a room of abundant light. Bakula was there to greet us. His dais was against one wall, raised about two feet from the floor. Against another wall was a bookcase behind whose glass doors I could see beautiful Buddhas, exquisitely bound books, colorful idols. Bakula sat opposite us on a cushion. In front of each of us was a small table. Bakula's table was higher than mine; mine was higher than Rahul's. Thus were the requirements of protocol met. A barefoot, scraggy lama appeared and placed food before us. There were many vegetables, all highly seasoned except the boiled rice. Bakula did not eat. He has but two meals a day, morning and noon. He did not even participate in the dessert—fresh apricots and tea. But while we ate, he talked. And most of the talk concerned Communism.

Bakula is short and wiry with deep-set eyes, high forehead, and a sharp-beaked nose. He is a quiet, introspective, scholar type of man in his early thirties. Bakula is a *geshes*—a professor of the University of Lhasa, where he spent twelve years poring over ecclesiastical texts. He seems to be the born teacher. But these days he is in active politics. He is a member of the Constituent Assembly of Kashmir and greatly concerned with the necessities of social reform in Ladakh. These days Bakula gives a great deal of his time to public and secular activities. He is learned in worldly affairs as well as in the Scriptures. He has studied Communism and knows the way Soviet imperialism uses it to extend its domain. He knows its history and understands its techniques. He has learned how Communism operates, the fronts it uses, the propaganda it spreads, the frictions it seeks to develop between rich and poor, its hatred and suspicion of the church, the system of terror it employs to advance its ends.

Bakula wanted to know about Communism in the United States, its strength in the labor movement, its placement in government, its power in the Army and Navy, the number of its adherents. He wanted also to know how strong Communism was growing in Europe and in the Middle East. His questions ranged far and wide and were penetrating in their reach.

I turned the discussion back to Ladakh and Tibet and the Buddhist world.

"What is the nature of Communist propaganda in Ladakh?" I asked.

"There is none," Bakula replied.

"No radio programs beamed to Ladakh?"

"There are not more than three radios in all of Ladakh."

"No literature distributed?"

“None.”

“No agents nor provocateurs operating for the Communist cause?”

“None.”

“No members of the Communist party in Ladakh?”

“Not a single one.”

I was amazed at these statements. In most of the countries I had traveled in Asia and the Middle East, the Communists were extremely active—stirring discontent, exploiting popular causes, using democratic slogans, posing as the champions of the oppressed. To find an area where no Communists were busy or involved was a great surprise. I asked Bakula how he explained it.

“The Communist strategy in the Buddhist world is first to get control of the church. That requires not propaganda but control of the ecclesiastical hierarchy,” he said.

“They have control of the Panchen Lama?”

“Yes, he is a Chinese sympathizer.”

“They now have control of the Dalai Lama?”

Bakula was deep in thought for several minutes.

“No one knows what will happen,” he finally replied. “All I can tell you is what I think will happen.”

“What is your guess?”

He went on to describe the temporal as well as the spiritual power that is in the hands of the Dalai Lama. It is this temporal power that the Communists will try to get.[1] Perhaps they can get it, not by disturbing the form of the arrangements but by controlling the laymen and lamas appointed to the positions of authority. Such a move would result in changes almost imperceptible but nonetheless destructive of the Dalai Lama’s temporal power. The Communists would then be in a position to exploit the differences between rich and poor, to breed discontent among the masses, to appropriate the wealth of the monasteries.

“Is that your prediction?” I asked.

“The Communists will use every means to get control of the wealth of the monasteries. My fear is that they will succeed.”

“What will happen then?”

“The monasteries will then become so poor that they cannot carry on their work, or they will become dependent on the Communist government for their financial support.”

“And in either case, become subservient to Communist influence?”

“Exactly.”

“But that would affect only Tibet. What about Ladakh?”

“The Dalai Lama is the spiritual head of the Mahayan school of Buddhism, which embraces China, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, Tibet, Ladakh, Bhutan, Lahul, Sikkim, and Spiti. Buddhists in these countries

look to him as Catholics look to the Pope in Rome. If the Communists control the Dalai Lama, they are in a fair way of controlling that part of the Buddhist world."

These were the worries and concerns of Bakula. These are the worries and concerns of those who know the Buddhist world.

Monasteries send their Incarnate Lamas to Lhasa for ten years of schooling. When they come back, will they not be either indoctrinated in Communist theories or, at least, not hostile to Communist influence?

The oracle at Lhasa tells each monastery where to find the reincarnation. That oracle will now be Communist. Will he not use his power to select Incarnate Lamas from friendly sources?

Millions upon millions look to the Dalai Lama as spiritual head of the church. The measure of their resistance to Communism may be dependent on the word from him. As Bakula told me, "Buddhism has a great hold on our people. It is the most important thing in their lives —more important than economic welfare, sanitation, modernization. Our people are interested primarily in matters spiritual."

The Chinese Communists, acting as pawns for Soviet Russia, now stand in a strategic position to exploit that religious situation to the limit. Meanwhile they do not remain idle. From reports that spilled over the Indian-Tibetan border in 1951, the Chinese Communists initially gained some prestige in the eyes of the peasants. They constructed roads and built new buildings. They drew up plans for the industrialization of Tibet. Soviet technicians were "invited" to participate. One of the first projects was a woolen mill. Another was a coal mine. The mill is under construction; the mine is operating. And Soviet technicians are already combing Tibet for uranium, gold, copper, coal, and iron—deposits said to be rich and yet to date never developed or exploited. To a country long under the deadening influence of feudalism, where nothing changed from century to century, any improvement marks the beginning of a new era. Moreover, the expulsion of the raiding Kasak bandits brought the Communist troops new prestige. By that act alone they had, in the eyes of the Tibetan peasant, gained credit as liberators.

But the power of the Buddhist priesthood, when allied against Communist forces, may be considerable. The lamas started an anti-Communist campaign, a part of which is reflected in a song from the lips of the women of Lhasa, who traditionally sing as they draw water from the wells.

In the religious city of Lhasa this year
Chinese soldiers have arrived like hail,
Whether as liberators it is in doubt,

Or to tie the throats of the poor.
For things that formerly cost a tranka[2]
We now pay a full do-tse[3]
So let us dance!
They speak sweetly
But what are the sticks [*rifles*] *in their hands*
If not to exterminate
Lord Buddha's doctrine and Tibetan people?
Rise, young men, be bold of heart!
And young maidens, unite together
That happiness may come
And misery depart!

The people of Lhasa began to challenge the authority of the Chinese in many ways. It was not long before the Chinese military strengthened their security measures in Tibet. They increased the Chinese garrison in Tibet. They deprived most of the larger monasteries, which have long served as the granaries of Tibet in time of famine, of their food reserves. The scarcity of food made it difficult for the monasteries to maintain their armed lama police (*dobdobs*). Moreover, the Chinese disarmed the *dobdobs*. Thus are the Communists undermining the power of the lamas.

The torch bearer escorted us through the dark, dungeon-like corridors of Sankar and brought us out on the crude, rough slab steps at the front of the monastery. The vast valley of Leh was at our feet, bathed in moonlight almost white in its intensity. This was the full moon, the time deemed most auspicious by the oracles of Lamaism for important decisions, for important action. The day of the full moon was indeed the time chosen for the Dalai Lama's return to Lhasa. The full moon would bring good luck even to his acceptance of a Communist regime in Tibet. The full moon would give a beneficent turn to the whole chain of events flowing from his agreement to live under the Communist Red Star.

That was the word on the lips of all the lamas in the Buddhist world. That was also the belief of those who sponsored the Communist cause—those who, like the Panchen Lama, saw power and privilege drifting their way when the hierarchy of Lamaism was finally controlled by the Chinese Communists.

These were my worries as Rahul and I picked our way down the rough, narrow footpath that runs through the barley fields stretching from Sankar to Leh. The full moon that this night was a good omen for Buddhists and Communists alike was an ill omen for the West. Soviet imperialism, with the aid of this brilliant moon, had this day gained a great victory. By reason of its hold on Red China it had swept within

the orbit of its influence much of the Buddhist world. It needed no propaganda, no literature, no radio programs. It needed no agents working among the masses, stirring them to discontent. All it needed was control of the masters of those masses, and this day it had achieved that end.

This full moon that filled both Buddhists and Communists with hope filled my heart with despair. This night—August 17, 1951—I had the awful realization that Asia was fast being lost. Our policy in Asia was primarily military, not political. Under slogans of righteousness and justice we had entered our armies in Korea against an aggressor. We had not stopped there; we had taken—or been forced to take—further steps. Now we were in bloody conflict with the Chinese. We had taken on Red China in a military project. Red China, battling the West, was being driven farther and farther into the arms of Soviet Russia. The alliance between Soviet Russia and Red China was indeed being cemented by our military attitude toward the problems of Asia. China was becoming more and more a junior partner of Soviet Russia. Soviet Russia was using her more and more as a pawn.

We had helped Yugoslavia free herself from Soviet imperialistic power. Yugoslavia, though still Communist, was no longer giving comfort to Soviet imperialism. Why could we not pry Red China loose from Russia? Why was not the grand play on the chessboard of Asian politics a political settlement with Red China, leading to recognition? If it were practical to effect one, if Red China would come halfway, we could work with her at the diplomatic level. Then we could widen the deep, basic conflicts between Russia and China and send whirling into opposition the clashing interests of Chinese nationalism and Soviet imperialism. Then we, rather than Russia, might become the indirect beneficiaries of the capture of the hierarchy of Buddhism by the Chinese.

The awful thought I had on this moon-drenched night above Leh was that our ignorance and arrogance were depleting our strength, impairing our power, and losing us our influence and prestige in Asia. We had mistaken our real enemy. Soviet Communism, evil as it is, is not our important enemy. Our real enemy—our implacable enemy—is Soviet imperialism that uses Communism as its instrument for expansion.

Now it was clear to me why we were losing Asia. Now the pattern of world politics was taking shape. The eerie moonlight above Leh seemed to make plain the great disaster that was being laid for the United States, the country I love. I could not sleep. I walked the valley of Leh for hours, this awful thought pounding in my head. And the depression that had seized me grew and grew as I realized the fury of the press, the fury of official Washington at anyone who would dare

propose that our differences with Red China be resolved, a political settlement worked out, and recognition of Red China afforded.

[1]One of the latest moves by the Communists in Tibet to dilute the temporal power of the Dalai Lama and to decentralize the authority of Lhasa over Tibet is the creation of an administrative council composed of the Dalai Lama and two pro-Communist Tibetans—the Panchen Lama and Sawang Ngabo. Thus the Panchen Lama is restored to the position of power he enjoyed last century. Moreover, the Chinese caused the Dalai Lama to dismiss the loyal Sawang Lukhang, who was Prime Minister and in charge of Tibet during the absence of the Dalai Lama from Lhasa.
[2]About five cents.
[3]About seventeen dollars.

Chapter 21
Ju Le, Ju Le

Leh, a town of 4,000, lies at 11,555 feet in a vast, sloping basin hemmed in on three sides by peaks that rise to 25,000 feet and more. The south side—the side we entered—flows in a gentle, rocky decline to the Indus.

We had followed the Indus from Marchelang downstream ten miles or more after we left Hemis. Higher up at Upshi the Indus had been a raging torrent pouring in a maddening roar through narrow gorges that served as fast, rock funnels for the dirty water. Below Marchelang it was as flat and calm as the Mississippi in summertime, spreading into estuaries and bays as it overran its banks and overflowing great reaches of bottom land. Not far below Marchelang the trail turns north and crosses the Indus. The Indus now divided into two main channels. Two rather primitive wooden bridges quivered at the touch of man or beast and shook nervously, permitting only one man or one animal on them at a time.

There is a grove of poplars on the far side of the bridges, and it was there that we stopped for lunch. In this grove camel caravans were repacking for the trek downstream to Khargil. Farmers were gathered under the trees, gleaning news from the men of the caravans. Mule trains, carrying produce between the villages up and down the Indus in the manner of our locals, rested in the shade. It was cool in the shade but blistering in the sun. Though this stretch of the Indus lay over eleven thousand feet high, the daytime temperature marched well over 100 degrees; and on some days it went into the 130's. The summer heat is so great and so sustained that it brings grain to maturity in two months' time.

The trail, after crossing the Indus, divides, one fork going south along the river's edge to Spitok, Khalatse, and Khargil, the other turning north to Leh, the Khardong Pass (18,380 feet), and Yarkand, an ancient trading center of Sinkiang. We took the right fork and in four miles came to Leh. This approach to Leh is dreary and desolate. In early summer there are buttercups, columbine (called asses' sugar), and clematis in this area. Later come the vetches, lavender, bluebells, and cornflowers. There are great stands of iris, which is sometimes stacked and dried for winter fodder. These flowers bring color to the land. But by mid-August the gaiety is gone. The flush of light green

from the tender spring grass has also passed. Now the slopes and nullas are dry and sear.

Monotonous browns and grays fill every stretch with desolation. Each view shows the end product of erosion. The ground has been endlessly pounded by the quick feet of goats and sheep; the protective covering of the earth has been eaten off or washed away; there is no topsoil left; every ravine tells the story of harsh runoffs of water; the fields and slopes are strewn with countless rocks, pitched up by the slow working of frost or exposed by the cutting wind that whines ceaselessly along the Indus. There is no shade, no touch of life, no bush, no scattered hummocks of the *dama* bush. There are distant snow-capped peaks to lift the heart; but there are only heat and dust and rubble underfoot.

Yet out of this waste and desolation have been built some of the most magnificent *mani* walls in the world. They stretch almost continuously the whole of the four miles from the Indus to the town of Leh. Some units are a mile long, fifteen feet wide, six or seven high, with *chhortens* at each end. Some are double, with a twenty-five-foot passage in between. Hundreds upon hundreds of slabs of flat rocks have been engraved with prayers and placed on top. All of these prayers are said for the passers-by, who, by the mere act of passing, gain merit. These *mani* walls are the product of centuries of work. Hundreds of faithful hands have carried the rocks from fields and gullies; hundreds of man hours have been spent by lamas working as stonemasons to cut prayers into slate, prayers that will do service so long as the rocks do last.

As we neared Leh we saw the longest of these *mani* walls and kept it on our right until we came close to the south gate of the ancient town. There we stopped and took pictures. I remarked to Rahul that this huge *mani* wall that ran downhill at our feet a mile or so reminded me of a great conduit carrying water off our western mountains for irrigation in distant valleys. He was amused at the symbolism and went on to review the economic plight of this region:

—most of the wealth is owned by a few men and the monasteries.
—the great mass of the people are poor, living at the bare subsistence level.
—the monasteries pay no taxes on their wealth.

Ladakh, therefore, is a deficit area—finance-wise; and since the Kashmir government gets precious little revenue from Ladakh, it is not anxious to spend much money there for improvement.

Ladakh, therefore, remains a feudal system in the modern world, a feudal system held together by the fears and superstitions and adoration created by the religious order of lamas.

"If half of the energy spent in building *mani* walls," Rahul said, "was spent in building irrigation projects for the people, Ladakh would prosper."

That was only a part of the plight of Ladakh. I was to learn about the rest when I reached Leh.

Leh is the ancient capital of Ladakh, with narrow, winding streets made for caravans, not cars. It indeed has no vehicle except the jeeps of the Indian Army garrison; and even jeeps have difficulty in squeezing through passageways no wider than mountain trails and lined with houses. The main bazaars are located along an L-shaped street as wide as any in our midwestern towns. They are narrow stalls flush with the street and, like most Far Eastern stores, closed by solid wooden doors sealed with padlocks. The long part of the L runs perhaps two blocks. At the point where the short leg of the L runs to the left, there is a Moslem mosque. When we entered the south gate of the ancient city and swung down the main avenue with my musical mule train, it was late afternoon. A Moslem priest was in the minaret of the mosque calling the faithful to prayer.

> *la ilaha illa—'llah:*
> *Mohammed rasulu—'llah.*
> *No god but Allah: Mohammed*
> *is the messenger of Allah.*

There are not many of the faithful in Ladakh—2,000 out of a total population of 80,000. This is predominantly Buddhist country, and so it has been for centuries. Yet the Moslem mosque is also ancient. Buddhism, more tolerant than the aggressive faith of Islam, has allowed the mosque to thrive through all the vicissitudes of peace and war.

It happened this way. The King of Ladakh was having trouble with the raids of the Tartars from the north. He sent a plea to the Maharajah of Kashmir, a Moslem, for help in expelling the aggressor. The Moslems have had a different relation to India than the Mongols. The Mongols always came to India to plunder, not to rule. The Moslems, who were Aryans, first came to India to propagate their faith in the ninth century. They took over the rule of India in the twelfth century. And so it was that the Maharajah of Kashmir, militant in his faith and with an eye to its propagation, agreed to drive the Mongols from Ladakh on one condition. The condition was that he be allowed to build a mosque at Leh. He pointed out that many of his faith followed the caravan route from Srinagar to Leh to Yarkand and yet had no holy place during their long absences from Kashmir where they could pray to Allah. The King of Ladakh, more intolerant of the Tartar invader than the Moslem proselytizer, agreed to the condition.

The mosque has thrived ever since.

The castle of the King of Ladakh, like the King himself, has not thrived. It stands on a cliff behind the mosque and towers over the town. It rises many stories, like an awkward skyscraper. Once it was a place of splendor. Here visiting royalty was entertained and feasts were spread. It was to this castle that emissaries from the various princes of Ladakh sped with payments of taxes and promises of fealty. It was in this castle that the kings of Ladakh made their compacts with lamas and so, through the use of spiritual power, welded together into a compact political unit the eight principalities of Ladakh.

The lamas still thrive. Their monasteries now hold the great wealth that this castle once commanded. The lamas utilized their spiritual power to acquire temporal strength. In the end, they surpassed the temporal power that gave them their freedom. The castle of the King of Ladakh, to be sure, still stands. But it is today empty—filled with cobwebs, bats, and the memories of an ancient power that events have transferred to other hands.

The law of Ladakh, administered by the ancient kings, had all the cruelty of our own early system. Ladakh knew trial by ordeal. It was resorted to when the evidence was unsatisfactory, when the judge with his human limitations needed supernatural wisdom to divine where the truth lay. Sometimes an accused would have to draw a red-hot iron through his hand or take a stone out of a pot of boiling oil. If he did this without injury, he would be in the clear. (The legends persist that there was a secret art for protecting the hands against such ordeals.) Sometimes the judge, when confused by the evidence, would cast lots instead and in that way determine on which side the truth lay.

Capital punishment in Tibet was cruel—pushing red-hot irons into the temples, hurling the convicted person from a great height, smashing his joints with a hammer. In Ladakh, when a temple was spoliated or a person horribly murdered, the guilty one was either crucified or bound hand and foot, weighted with stones, and thrown into the Indus to drown. The usual punishment for crimes—whether adultery or theft—was whipping, fine, or imprisonment. There was a mounting scale of fury which society directed against the thief. For the second offense of stealing, he lost his left hand; for the third, his right hand; for the fourth, he was drowned in the Indus.

At Leh I inquired about these practices, and I learned that they are now mostly history. They are history not only because the Kashmir law is an ameliorating one but because the Buddhist religion has made a vast difference in the lives of the people. Thus I could find in Leh no modern record of a crime of violence—murder, manslaughter, rape, assault and battery.

“Don’t put too much reliance on the absence of rape,” a junior officer laughingly told me. “The resistance point of the average Ladakhi woman is pretty low.”

“How about killings?”

“None.”

“Assaults?”

“None.”

“Not even between husbands in polyandric families where several brothers must share one wife?”

“Oh, the brothers often get filled up with *chan* and shout at each other and argue, but they do not come to blows.”

Buddha taught the principle of non-violence; and it so molded the character of the people that centuries later non-violence was a working standard even in the hurly-burly of a great caravan center such as Leh. I could find modern records of thefts but few other crimes.

Leh is on a historic caravan route that leads not only to Yarkand in Sinkiang but to Lhasa in Tibet. It thrived when commerce thrived; it had depressions when war or bandits or jealous politics diverted the stream of trade. Wool, silver, felts, tea, candy, skins, velvets, silk, gold, carpets, musk, coral, borax, jade cups, salt came down from the north. Cotton goods, shawls, brocades, opium, indigo, plumes, shoes, pearls, ginger, cloves, pepper, honey, tobacco, sugar cane, barley, rice, wheat, corn came up from the south. The large serai—about a half block square—where the caravans stopped at Leh still stands. The bazaars where the goods were sold or haggled over, the market place where men searched out new trade missions, the place where ponies were bought, sold, or rented—these are still there. People swarm through the L-shaped bazaar of Leh as they did a century or two earlier. A few of the shops are open, the merchants sitting on their haunches in small stalls weighing out walnuts or ginger, haggling over mule bells or turbans, measuring out three yards of cotton cloth.

But the ancient hum of the market is gone. Many of the stalls are closed. Their heavy wooden doors have been swung shut and fastened with padlocks. No longer are great caravans loaded with merchandise coming down from Yarkand in Sinkiang and Demchok in Tibet. In August 1951, there was some trade trickling over the Tibetan border. But it was slackening. There was none from Yarkand, for the Russians had closed the Sinkiang border. Yarkand merchants, who had picked their way over high passes to visit Leh, were now marooned. They could not return to Yarkand. They had no roots in Leh. They wandered through the empty bazaars, their light yellow skin almost white from sadness.

A depression had struck Leh. This was not a temporary depression.

This was no seasonal or cyclical recession. The markets had not dried up owing to the natural causes that affect all markets. This was not demand and supply reacting in the classical way. Leh had reached the end of an era.

Russia had blocked the north and south trade routes that for centuries had been important to both areas. From now on all the commerce would move east and west. Russia would use the commerce of China and Tibet and Sinkiang to lace those three areas tightly into the Soviet Empire. If Tibetans needed sugar or barley, Russia would provide it. Russia would make their dependency on her an instrument for political control. Those who wanted barley in order to live would need be docile serfs in the Soviet scheme of things. The merchants of China, Sinkiang, and Tibet no longer would be free agents operating in an open market. The markets would be political instruments of Soviet imperialism. The candy merchants of Yarkand would now look to Russia for sugar cane. Russia would get her sugar cane by leverage on some other country and dispense it in Yarkand to the faithful. Those who did not toe the line would go without sugar.

The consequence of turning all the trade east and west is vast and incalculable. It is a part of Soviet empire building. It is part and parcel of the proselytizing of the Communist cause. The victims inside the Soviet Empire will perhaps never be known. Some of the victims outside the Soviet Empire can already be seen. The bedraggled merchants of Leh face a dismal future. There are no goods on the market. Scarcity has produced high prices. Real inflation has set in. Inflation has reached even to the lowly dzo that furnishes the motive power on the farm. The dzo now rents for four or five rupees a day, where one rupee used to be ample. The prostitutes of Leh have revised their rates. For years they charged four annas (five cents); now their uniform rate is one rupee (twenty cents).

Leh barely keeps alive. The demands of its native population bring some life to the markets. But Leh will shrink to a tiny village on that volume of trade. To date it has been saved by its Indian Army garrison, whose purchasing power keeps the ancient city alive. But once that artificial stimulant is removed, Leh will shrivel. There are projects for development of Ladakh. It is found, for example, that drug herbs grow well there and have an extraordinarily high alkaloid content. Kashmir is promoting the use of Ladakh for growing drug herbs on a commercial scale. Unless Kashmir undertakes a bold economic and social program in Ladakh, Leh will soon become as much a relic of the past as the gaunt and empty castle of the King that looks down on the old capital of Little Tibet.

The people of Leh do not seem to know the worries of which I speak. They have little; they expect no more; they are happy with

their lot. They are friendly and cheerful, simple and uncomplicated. I stayed with them and came to know their simple faith. The deities of the passes, of the rivers, of the valleys are real to them. So are their fears and superstitions. They are gentle people, and poor beyond belief, held closely to their faith by stern lamas.

The beautiful women in Leh are the young ones in their teens or twenties. A woman, by the time she is thirty, has usually faded. She carries the work of the house, the weight of the children, the burden of the fields. By forty she is old, with no buoyancy left. But the young lady knows the gaiety of hope, the laughter of dreams. Such a girl was Zila. She wore a chic sheepskin over her shoulders, the fur side under. The fleece had been washed and combed and made to spray out along the edges of the garment and over her shoulders. These streamers of wool against Zila's dark dress, like her beautiful teeth against her dark lips, gave her a rare beauty.

I met Zila at the Moravian Mission at Leh, a mission established a century ago by devout Germans. It is now headed by two fine Britishers, Dr. and Mrs. Norman Driver, who dispense religion and pills with special emphasis on the medicines, for Leh is rife with venereal disease, intestinal worms, and goiter. Zila works for the Drivers; and one day in their garden I heard her singing. She played the *daps*—a skin stretched on a hoop about three feet in diameter. Zila sang of love in a sad and melancholy voice:

When I approached the city gate,
They shut it in my face.
I salute you,
The Rose of Ladakh.
I put my life in your hands.
I carry my cup and food,
And come with you.
I salute you,
*The Rose of Ladakh.**

**See Appendix 4, song 5*

I asked Zila to sing more. She went and brought back another girl and two men, and they sat for an hour or more beating the *daps* and singing folk songs. All of them had sad voices; all of them but Zila had sad faces. Her face was lighted with happiness; her eyes danced; her white teeth gleamed. She threw back her head and gave zest to the song about Tseringskyit. It was Zila who took the lead, the other girl and the two men making the response:

VERSE
Have you not seen my friend, Tseringskyit?
RESPONSE
I do not know your friend, Tseringskyit.
VERSE
Her body is as though it were made of gold. She has just passed by this way. Have you not seen my friend, Tseringskyit?
RESPONSE
I do not know your friend, Tseringskyit.
VERSE
Her brow is like the moon when full. She has just passed by this way. Have you not seen my friend, Tseringskyit?
RESPONSE
I do not know your friend, Tseringskyit.
VERSE
Her eyebrows are like the vowel sign. She has just passed by this way. Have you not seen my friend, Tseringskyit?
RESPONSE
I do not know your friend, Tseringskyit.
VERSE
Her nose is like a copper tube. She has just passed by this way. Have you not seen my friend, Tseringskyit?
RESPONSE
I have not seen your friend, Tseringskyit.
VERSE
*Her teeth are as beautiful as pearls. She has just passed by this way. Have you not seen my friend, Tseringskyit?**

** See Appendix 4, song 6*

The searching for love and affection is endless. It goes on the world around. The search crosses the highest passes of the Himalayas. Tseringskyit—the one who has just passed by and yet is so remote and so elusive—is the smybol of that search in the wastelands of Ladakh. Tseringskyit, not Communism, carries the hopes of the people. For Tseringskyit knows tenderness and compassion; Tseringskyit has understanding. Yet Tseringskyit has beauty too—the beauty that lifts men above the sordid environment of their lives.

One night we sat at the Officers' Club in Leh, talking of the competition for men's souls. Communism professes love of mankind, but it preaches hate and practices terror. People want love and affection. It will be love and affection that will prevail in the universal, planetary scheme of things. It will be love and affection, not physical power, that will win Asia.

This theme is illustrated a thousand ways when one travels Asia with a sensitive ear. It cropped out this evening at the Officers' Club in Leh.

I had come directly to the Officers' Club on our arrival. Rahul had tarried in the bazaar greeting old acquaintances. Now I saw him coming up the poplar-lined driveway of the club on his small Tibetan pony. Turning to a junior officer, I whispered, "Would it be all right if I introduced the General to a ghost?"

One does not speak lightly of ghosts in this land of mysticism where

gods and goddesses, spirits and demons, deities and the souls of the departed are everywhere. The face of the young officer was very serious, for the question troubled him. And not yet realizing the humor of my question, he replied quite formally, “I guess so, sir.”

Rahul had met with an accident on one of the estuaries of the Indus River. After we had left Hemis en route to Leh, we picked up the Indus and followed it downstream several miles before leaving the river and turning north to Leh. At one point the Indus had inundated hundreds of acres of lowlands and left behind dozens of small lagoons, which we had to ford. Some of these passages were treacherous. The water was deep, there were unexpected holes, and the clay bottom was as sticky as glue. Rahul was riding an unusually small Tibetan pony, perhaps eight hands high. It was sturdy and fast, but it lacked the power and strength of the larger horses. I led the way across one small lagoon. Though the passage seemed safe enough, Rahul’s horse either got stuck or stepped in a hole and foundered. In any event, the horse went over on its side and both he and Rahul disappeared for a second under the water.

They both came out without injury. Rahul was soaked through, and it took him several hours to get dry. He had about dried out when we arrived at Leh. The water which had soaked him was heavy with the milk of clay. So when Rahul got dry, he looked indeed like a ghost.

“May I present my ghost?” I asked as Rahul joined us at the Officers’ Club. Rahul’s warm brown eyes looked out from a calcimined face, the dark skin of his hands was powdered white, and great clouds of dust rose from his shoulders as I pounded him with the deep affection I felt for the man who had brought me safely along a treacherous trail over the high Himalayas.

That night after dinner in the officers’ mess Rahul and I sat an hour or more with General Karve and other Indian Army officers, talking of the problems of this border region.

We were breaking up for the evening when a Sikh, who was a captain on General Karve’s staff, took me aside and said, “We can’t begin to tell you what your coming means to us. This is probably the most remote military outpost in the world. Others have come the route you took. But they had to come. You are one of the few who came who didn’t have to come. We know the dangers and the great exertions of the trek. The fact that you crossed the oceans in order to make this dangerous journey gives us all courage to carry on. On behalf of the General, the staff, and the men, sir, I thank you.” And with that he saluted warmly and disappeared in the darkness.

I sat for a long time that night under the cottonwood trees in front of the Officers’ Club, watching the moon and the clouds turn glaciers from silver to gold and then erase them completely. And as I sat I

pondered on the strange and powerful planetary tides that throw the whole human race into bloody conflicts. As I sat there in the moonlight I remembered my arrival in Leh. I had entered the south gate with my musical mule train—the gate through which the Portuguese Jesuits, de Azevedo and de Oliviera, the first European visitors to Ladakh, passed in 1631.

The bells of my mule train had brought everyone running. A woman who had been sitting on the ground and picking lice from another woman's head jumped to her feet. Women who had been squatting in the street selling turnips and eggs stood up as if startled. Women who were bringing bundles of grass to the bazaar to exchange for cooking oil or talcum powder dashed around the corner to stare. Tibetans, one arm free of the sleeve of their jackets, Yarkandis with sad and forlorn faces, farmers dressed in rags—all stood poker-faced, looking my way. Young girls with sheepskins flying from their backs raced down narrow passageways to reach the bazaar. Youngsters in rags and tatters scooted out of doorways and windows to fill the street. Now I was surrounded by a mass of humanity so thick, so tightly packed, my mule train could hardly move.

I smiled and waved and shouted, "*Ju Le, Ju Le*." It was as if a miracle had happened. The curious, reserved, staring crowd relaxed. They too smiled. Some shouted. Men touched their foreheads and cried, "*Ju Le, Ju Le*." Women touched their foreheads and murmured, "*Ju Le, Ju Le*." And little children, four, five, eight years old, touched their foreheads, and they too shouted, "*Ju Le, Ju Le*."

Asia has never received much affection from the West. Asia has known the harsh, the rough, the exploitive characteristics of the West. Asia has rebelled at that side of us. Asia has grown more and more aloof, more and more remote, more and more severe in her attitudes. Asia is being lost because of it. And the tragedy is that Asia can be had for modest investments in affection.

Asia is the mother figure. So she has been throughout all time. From her have come the great streams of population. We trace back to her through the Aryans that poured from Central Asia. She has the fertility; and she also has the insight, the wisdom, the intuition, the perseverance, the courage that go with fertility. Among individuals there is no complete male, no complete female. Each person has both the male and the female component. Some women have prominent male characteristics. They are the andrics—the executives, the aggressive type, those who in the extreme are the Amazons. Some men have prominent female characteristics. They are the gynics—the artists, the leading conservationists, the most penetrating psychoanalysts.

What is true among individuals is, I believe, true among nations.

Races are divided into andrics and gynics. Whole civilizations carry the marks of maleness on the one hand or femaleness on the other. Asia is the gynic; we of the West are the andrics. We are the aggressive male figures that shake the earth and remake it. Asia is the female that silently creates, that builds slowly and patiently, that hangs on passionately to her past. We are the extroverts; Asia is brooding and introspective. We are doers; we like to show our strength. Asia likes to contemplate.

Asia cannot always be treated with tenderness. There are cunning and cruelty and deceit in Asia. Asia's unruly character is often expressed in actions more subtle than ours. Asia often needs discipline. Asia would not rebel at discipline any more than Rup Singh, my muleteer, rebelled at my treatment of him. Asia would indeed understand quick and severe punishment for unlawful acts. That is why the initial moves of the United Nations in Korea were psychologically sound by Asian standards.

But we must play the masculine role with intelligence. We cannot win Asia by long, drawn-out, indecisive military engagements such as we have been conducting in Korea.

We are pitting East and West in a bloody conflict. That is the way to make a tigress out of the female, an enemy more dangerous than any male can ever be. Asia needs more than a show of strength; Asia needs affection from those who represent the masculine component in the planetary scheme. If Asia knew our affection as well as our power, we could be wedded to her in great and noble deeds. The threat of Soviet imperialism would disappear as a mad dream of another psychopathic personality. Stalin would then have allied against him the most cunning, the most implacable, the most unforgiving enemy his godless creed has ever known. The energies, the schemes, the wiles of Asia would then be plotting against him day and night.

Asia needs us as much as we need Asia. We and Asia complement each other. We have the energy of the male, Asia the lasting wisdom of the female. Asia has a longing for us that can be turned into a mounting fury of tremendous destruction or into channels of co-operation and understanding and dependency.

These were my thoughts under the cottonwoods of Leh. I had missed this message in the hungry faces of Delhi and Calcutta. I had to sweat and struggle over six high passes of the Himalayas and settle down in the little village of Leh to learn that, while Asia will respect our strength, her hunger is for our friendship. I learned that lesson from the cunning Rup Singh. I learned it from Zila and her sweet song of Tseringskyit. I learned it from the little tots on the streets of Leh who opened their hearts to me. Their smiles were as eager as they were cheerful when they touched their foreheads and shouted, "*Ju Le,*

Ju Le."

When I expounded these ideas to Rahul, his deep, warm eyes were lost in thought for several minutes. He finally answered, saying he was not sure of the femaleness of Asia and the maleness of the West. But he was certain of one thing; and his face lighted up when he announced it. "We want an enduring partnership with the West. Most of us and most of you are men of good will. We must find practical ways of forging a working alliance for the cause of peace. Dollars and earthly goods will not do it. It can be done only by ideas of brotherhood and fraternity."

There was a pause before he continued, "Asia has given the West many ideas. People forget that Asia gave the West its great religions. Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, all came from Asia. But the West also has an important message for Asia—a message from America's Declaration of Independence."

"And what is that?"

"The creed that all men are created equal and that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are their inalienable rights."

PART 2

THE GREAT NORTHWEST

Chapter 1
"On The Hilt And The Haft Of The Khyber Knife"

I first saw the Khyber Pass from the west. I had come by car from Kabul, capital of Afghanistan, en route to Peshawar (Pakistan), Saidu (Swat), and the Gilgit area of the Karakorams. It is about 180 miles from Kabul to the Khyber, and it took Abdul, who drove the Chevrolet, and me twelve hours to negotiate it. Once we reached thirty miles an hour, but that was only a brief spurt. We jogged and bounced over great rock fields left bare by flash floods, and ground our way through the coarse sand of old river beds, averaging barely fifteen miles an hour. We crossed a wild waste of barren hills, climbing narrow roads that clung like goat trails to dizzy cliffs. We dropped to narrow, twisting canyons, no more than a stone's throw wide—canyons dug slowly out by the Kabul River on its long, meandering journey to the Indus, canyons ideally designed, as the British sadly learned, for ambush and massacre. Once more we mounted rough, rocky crags, and wound wearily around vast granite escarpments, and in a dozen miles or so came to wide valleys where melons, clover, and wheat grow.

There are a few spots such as Jalalabad—a green, pleasant town—where the Kabul River spreads out a hundred yards or more into a broad, purling stream and transforms sandy valleys into oases. There are poplar, cypress, mulberry, ash, and willow in Jalalabad, and their shade seemed doubly deep because of the brilliance of the sun on the bare rock hills to the north and south.

The heat this July day was oppressive, the temperature mounting well over 120 degrees. The wind was hot and searing. East of Jalalabad, Abdul stopped to fix a tire. The road is filled with coarse tacks that fall from the sandals of the hundreds of men who walk it. This is a main highway for the gypsy nomads of Central Asia. Down they come in the winter to the plains of India; up they go to northern Afghanistan in the summer. They move with their sheep and their goats, their camel caravans, their mules, horses, and bullocks. These caravans bring the famous karakul skins, carpets of reddish hues, melons, dried fruits, hides, and wool down to Peshawar; and on their return north they carry sugar, corn, cloth, and other manufactured products. Tens of thousands of people make these migrations

annually. And as they go the tacks in their shoes drop out. These tacks have broad, heavy heads and sharp points. They lie head down in the dust, waiting for automobile tires to pick them up. We picked up some, and that is why Abdul had a tire to change.

The place where we stopped was the hottest place I have ever visited, including the Dead Sea. There was nothing but sand and outcroppings of lava as far as the eye could see. Usually in a desert there is camel thorn or some other coarse and vulgar weed that camels like. Here there was nothing for even a camel—only sand and rock so hot I could feel it burn through my leather soles. This was the dry stinging heat of the furnace.

I stepped into the sun to escape the oven of the car. There was no shelter anywhere. Even the distant hills where marigolds and bugloss give streaks of yellow in March offered no shade. There was the awful sense of suffocation; and for one of the few times in my life I felt completely helpless. Abdul boiled under the heat as he struggled with the tire in the hot sand. I stooped to help, and the nuts were so hot they raised blisters on my fingers. When the car wound once more across the burning sand, I had the sense of escape from some overpowering peril.

We stopped at bare and desolate Dakka, the Afghan border station, to get permission to quit Afghanistan, and had tea with a Mr. Nasser, a pleasant young customs official, who told me of the trout in the Kabul and the ibex on the hills above Dakka. We stopped at bare and desolate Torcha on the Pakistan border and had lemonade and tea with hospitable Pakistani officials. And as we sat with them in the shade of willows I got my first view of the Khyber.

It lay before me to the east, 3,518 feet high. It looked like any one of a dozen notches in the low-lying, barren hills of our Pacific Northwest. There were no trees, no grass, no shrubs in evidence. Only rocks and coarse dirt. The dirt road of Afghanistan now turned to good asphalt that the British had built through the Khyber. Not far from Torcha are concrete road blocks to be dragged into place in case the border must be sealed. Beyond them the road climbs in serpentine fashion, skirting the brow of the hill, dropping corkscrew down steep canyon walls, and passing through defiles from a few hundred feet to forty feet wide. And on each side are cliffs rising thirteen hundred feet. There are blockhouses placed at strategic points—heavy, drab forts with thick gates and walls, built against the hazards of the siege. What seems from the west to be a notch is only the entrance to a long, twisting canyon thirty miles long. All of it is the Khyber that finally disgorges on the hot, flat plains of Peshawar near the great city of Peshawar.

There is no water in the Khyber. There is no grass. There are only

rocks and heat and the Pathans who inhabit this range. These are the Afridis, Wazirs, Mahsuds, Shinwaris, Bajawaris, Baluchs, and Mohmands. The home of Haji Malik Murad Khan of the Shinwaris on the west side of the Khyber is a fortress. To the east in one wide stretch of the Khyber are a few huts of the Afridis. But most of the Pathans live to the north or the south, raising a bit of grain and running some sheep and goats as far north as the Russian border.

The caravan route through the Khyber is separate from the asphalt highway. The emergencies that arise, the military alarms that are sounded make it necessary to keep the paved road clear for troops and trucks. The thousands of animals in the great caravans that pass this way would clog the highway. So they travel a dirt road that runs under, above, or across from the motor road, picking their way through one of the hottest funnels, perhaps the most dangerous one, the world has known.

Kipling made Khyber Pass immortal. And he made the Pathans—the hillmen who sniped and raided there—legendary characters. Kipling wrote mainly of British experiences. But the British were late-comers, first placing a military post in the Khyber Pass in 1839. Long, long before then the people of the East had known the Khyber as an awful funnel through which fury and destruction repeatedly whirled. And they knew the Pathans, not so much as the murderous, thieving, untrustworthy lot which the West has painted them, but as independent hillmen harassing the flanks of all invaders who came their way.

The Khyber is a historic route of the invader. It is one of the four main western gates to India. It was through the Khyber that the Aryans poured, 3000–2000 B.C., as they swept through Afghanistan into Persia and India. Darius of Persia, who conquered the world of his day, did not quite reach it in his eastward sweep. Darius stopped at Kabul in 516 B.C., about two hundred miles short of the Khyber, and there drew the eastern boundary of his empire. The conqueror of Persia who smashed the kingdom of Darius to pieces, burning and ravishing the magnificent Persepolis in the process, poured his legions north of the Khyber in 327 B.C., He was Alexander the Great, whose spear, before its thrust was spent, almost reached the heart of Asia.

Mahmoud of Ghazni—an Afghan—brought an army over the Khyber in A.D., 1000. In the next twenty-four years he sent twelve expeditions against India. Mahmoud waged a holy war; he carried Mohammed's sword; and he fought against the infidel, converting the great Northwest of India to the Islamic faith. So it remains today.

Genghis Khan sent his bloody, godless Mongols pouring through this funnel in A.D., 1220, slaying the Moslems, destroying their cities, and carrying their women back to the Gobi Desert.

Timur the Tartar followed in 1398, his forces roaring through the Khyber like a hot flame, burning and sacking temples and palaces and cities and drenching India with the blood of her innocent citizens.

In A.D. 1518 came Baber Khan. He too came with a rush over the Khyber—a rush as violent as the strong west wind that howls there today. Baber Khan conquered the Punjab and then India and in 1527 started the Mogul dynasty that was to rule until England took over India. In 1738 Nadir Shah of Persia, with a host of hard-riding warriors (many of them ancestors of my Ghashghai friends), outflanked the Khyber, headed for the capture of Delhi; and not long after they returned west at a slower pace, carrying the Peacock Throne as part of their prize.

In A.D. 1756, before the British conquered and subdued this great Northwest, the Afghans again streamed through the Khyber and went on to conquer Kashmir and make it a Moslem state.

If Russia decides to strike India, it is through the Khyber that her Red hordes will roar, bent on placing the scourge of the Kremlin on Asia.

By the time the British placed their armies athwart the Khyber the place had become a Moslem stronghold. The great tribes that dominate the range which the Khyber pierces are devout Moslems, whose rifles are committed to religious missions. These Pathans are a hardy lot—they can climb the rock slopes of the Khyber with the agility of the ibex or markhor. They are zealous and fanatic—they would die to the last man before surrendering an inch of their ancestral ground.

The Khyber has in a sense become a holy place. The Pathans erected a mosque there—the mosque of Ali Musjid. The legends grew about Ali—the son-in-law of the Prophet—and the Khyber. There are those who today can point out the hoofprints of the great horse that Ali rode on his heavenly ascension. Those hoofprints are no ordinary marks made by an ordinary horse. They are marks which only a supernatural horse going with the speed of the wind could make. They are widely separated but distinctly shown in the flint rock of the Khyber—marks obviously made by a beast, half flying, half running, and touching the ground only now and then.

The defense of the Khyber was a holy affair. The Pathans wrote songs about it. Some were songs against the godless Moguls:

> *I will crown my forehead with a drop of my hero's blood.*
> *It will put to shame even a spring garden rose.*

Some were songs against the Sikhs, who ruled the Punjab against the terror of the Pathans:

I will never give my lips to thee, my hero,
Unless thou bringest me the severed heads of the Kafirs, my hero.

The Afridis still sing one about their 1897 war with the British:

Lo, here approach the British armies.
Arise, ye Pathans, arise.
We must wipe out their forces,
No matter if Kabul, Herat,
Russia and the rest of the East
Stand in the way.
It is a war between Moslems and non-Moslems.
Arise, ye Pathans, arise.

The British paid heavily for the Khyber. (See Barton, *India's Northwest Frontier;* Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan.*)

Many brave Englishmen died there that this back door to India be barred. They died under a blistering sun among rocks where Afridis lay quietly in ambush. They were picked off one by one with bullets whining down from the crags that overlooked every fortress. As Kipling wrote in *Arithmetic on the Frontier:*

The flying bullet down the Pass,
That whistles clear: "All flesh is grass."

British Tommies fell as they did sentry duty or changed the guard. Hundreds of them were surrounded and wiped out before relief could reach them. British blood made the Khyber red; and British bravery made it glorious:

With home-bred hordes the hillsides teem,
The troopships bring us one by one,
At vast expense of time and steam,
To slay Afridis where they run.
The "captives of our bow and spear"
Are cheap, alas! as we are dear.

The Pathans too found glory there. There was Muttan, the Afridi—a tall, lean, athletic highlander with blue eyes, a fair skin, high cheekbones, and a prominent nose. He wore a coarse blue shirt, loose trousers, sandals, a large turban, and a colored waistband stuffed with knives and pistols. And his pride and joy was a British rifle. Once he had served the British in the Khyber Rifles. Later he came into disfavor and was declared an outlaw. He was hunted down above the Khyber and killed in a den like a wolf. Today the Afridis still sing:

O fate is implacable, do what one may,
Treacherously surrounded was Muttan,
The rose of the Khyber Pass.
O now who'll raid the plains?

The Pathans still like to fight. The annual list of killings along the Khyber remains high. The manufacture of arms and ammunition is a major industry. These days the demand for rifles has increased so that now one good rifle costs more than even a good woman. For years the British tried to find the tribal arms foundry. They never succeeded. Yet it was then where it is today—in the village of Dera Adamkhel, north of the Khyber, where six hundred tribesmen, turned smiths, duplicate factory-made guns and ammunition with such skill that only experts can tell the difference.

The British never effectively controlled this rebellious border area. They bought the allegiance of some of the tribes—bought it temporarily, that is. For when the payments stopped, new and violent troubles broke out. As a result, there is a classic statement heard along the Khyber even to this day, "It is easier to deprive a savage dog of his bone than a Mahsud of his allowances."

The Pathans today constitute a major problem in the great Northwest of Pakistan. The problem is somewhat different from what it was under the British; but it has aspects as vivid and as exciting as anything the British ever knew.

There are about thirteen million Pathans (Pakhtuns), of whom one and a half million live in the mountain region between central Afghanistan and the border, five million in Pakistan. The Pathans want their own nation—Pakhtunistan, which they claim runs from the eastern border of Afghanistan to the Indus River on the east and to the Arabian Sea on the south, an area of over 190,000 square miles and seven million people. That is the heart of West Pakistan.

Their claim is based on historical data too lengthy to relate in detail here. In short it is that they, a people speaking the Pukhto language and having a distinct culture and history, wielded power over this vast domain until the British in 1894 took a large slice of it away through a perfidious agreement with Afghanistan by which the eastern border of Afghanistan (the Durand line) was set much too far to the west. The Pathans say that when the British withdrew from India, turning part of the country over to the Hindus and part to the Moslems, their right to their ancestral home matured. They claim that the land west of the Indus is theirs and that Pakistan unjustly holds it. The Pathans made the claim to the British at the time of the partition of India; and the British bequeathed the problem to the successor government. The Pathans cite the Atlantic Charter and the Charter of the United

Nations to bolster their plea for independence. Afghanistan supports the Pathans in this dispute with Pakistan.

This controversy with Pakistan has had curious results, having brought Afghanistan, a nation of Moslems, in close harmony with India, a nation of Hindus. The two nations signed a treaty of friendship in 1950, the first entered into by India with an Asian country. India's dispute over Kashmir, the Pathans' dispute over Pakhtunistan have subtly given India, the Afghans, and the Pathans a common cause.

The Pathans' claim to an independent state of Pakhtunistan has led to violence between Pakistan and the tribes. The tribes clamor for the release from Pakistan's jails of their leaders—Badshah Khan and Dr. Khan Sahib. The Pathans formed a parliament in 1949. They adopted a flag—a red mountain and a rising sun. They have drawn a constitution that is dedicated to the principles of the Islamic faith. They are living up to Winston Churchill's appraisal of the Pathan, "Every man is a warrior, a politician, and a theologian."

In retrospect it seems that Pakhtunistan was all that I heard in Afghanistan. I heard it discussed at state dinners in Kabul. Officials took me aside to explain it to me and defend its merits. At Bamian in the north, Kabul in the south, the Khyber in the east, I talked with Pathans about it.

A young man in his twenties, an eager, passionate Pathan who was filled with fervor for Pakhtunistan, sang me endless verses of a song promoting the cause. There were hard, bloody lines in the song—as hard and as bloody as the Mohmands and the Afridis. I remember one in particular:

Be a martyr for Pakhtunistan
The virgin will come and salute you in the grave.*

** See Appendix 4, song 7*

One day at a small village between Kabul and Bamian, a village called Pulmatick, I fell in with a group of Pathans. They were headed north with their sheep and goats, grazing as they went. Two of the men had monkeys who did tricks for me. As they performed, the Pathan men, women, and children stopped their trek, gathered round, and stood politely quiet while I talked with them through my interpreter, Faqir M. Mohmand, who is also a Pathan from the chief family of the Mohmands. Faqir, slight, dark-featured, with finely chiseled nose and warm eyes, probed the minds of these Pathans for me.

"They do not understand why America does not do something about

Pakhtunistan."

"America probably never heard of Pakhtunistan."

"What? Your people do not know about Pakhtunistan?" Faqir's eyes were now ablaze. He was dumfounded that the cause which to him, a Pathan, was such a burning one was not known in America.

That night at Bamian we ate Afghan country-style—holding the fingers of the right hand in the form of a scoop and using it to shovel rice, gravy, lamb, and carrots into our mouths. Faqir was long silent. When we had finished and a bowl had been passed so that we might wash our hands, he turned to me and explained how strong, how valiant, how true and loyal the Pathans would be in case they had their separate state.

"We will then be a thorn in Russia's side. Recognize us, give us guns and tanks, and we will never, never give in to the Red hordes."

"But Pakistan will also resist the Soviets," I replied. "Pakistan, strong in the faith of Islam, will never become a tool of Soviet scheming."

"Yes," Faqir cried. "We Moslems will always stand against Russia." He paused, his chin out, his shoulders squared. And then he. said with pride and great dignity, "But none can fight better than we Pakhtuns. We fight to the last man. We never give in. If America has the Pakhtuns as an ally, she will have an ally who will never quit."

The history of the Pathans, as I had read it in English, came pouring through my mind as Faqir spoke. Faqir was proud of it. He spoke of deeds of gallantry and sacrifice. He spoke of superhuman feats. He told me of the code of the Pathans:

—a Pathan must grant to all fugitives the right of asylum;
—a Pathan must offer hospitality even to his deadliest enemy;
—a Pathan must wipe out insult with insult.

"Tell me," he pleaded, "who would make better allies for America?"

That night at Bamian, Faqir came to my sleeping bag just before I went off to sleep. Dropping on one knee, he whispered, "Korea was bad for the Pakhtuns."

"Why?"

"If America will move against Korea, she will move against us Pakhtuns in case we seize our ancient home and create Pakhtunistan."

There was a long silence as I studied the earnest face of the fiery Faqir. I thought of the compliment John Garner used to give a man in whom he had the greatest confidence and trust. "He's the fellow I'd take along if I was going to rob a train," Garner used to say. That was the stature Faqir was acquiring in my eyes. Now there was a conspiratorial tone to his voice.

"If you say that America will not treat us as she treated the Koreans,

we can start tonight. And you can go with the Pakhtuns." And squeezing my shoulder, he silently melted away in the darkness.

That night at Bamian I first knew what Kipling meant when he wrote *The Ballad of East and West*. I felt the strange and spiritual bond that could be forged between men irrespective of East or West, irrespective of Border, or Breed, or Birth.

> *They have looked each other between the eyes,*
> *and there they found no fault.*
> *They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood*
> *on leavened bread and salt:*
> *They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood*
> *on fire and fresh-cut sod,*
> *On the hilt and the haft of the Khyber knife,*
> *and the Wondrous Names of God.*

Faqir had tapped some of the Pathan springs within me—springs that perhaps all hillmen have—springs that probably fed my blood stream ages ago in the hills of Scotland. I lay for a long time before going to sleep. In my fancy I rode and camped with the Pathans as they kept uneasy eyes on the Khyber and on the long, narrow valleys that stretch south from the Russian border. Now I began to understand them, to see them in their historic role. That night at Bamian I knew I would be at home with the Mohmands and the Afridis when the Red torrent roared down from the north.

Chapter 2
At Rest On The Russian Border

The Hindu Kush is a mountain range that penetrates Afghanistan in the northeast corner and runs across the nation in a west-by-south course. It has a curvature that is concave to the south and so opens its arms to the rain-bearing winds that sweep up from the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. The range in its northeastern end has peaks over 20,000 feet, with Tirichmir reaching 25,263 feet. At that end are the famous passes of Lowarai (10,200 feet), Darkot (15,400 feet), and Baraghil (12,400 feet) that have let a few raiders from the north trickle through. There also are the headwaters of the Oxus River (Amu Darya), which forms through a part of its course the boundary between Afghanistan and Russia and runs 1,600 miles into the Sea of Aral.

The northeastern part of the Hindu Kush is heavily wooded with deodars, pine, and larch. The middle stretch, which I know best, has no trees as far as the eye can see. The peaks here are 15,000 feet to 18,000 feet high. There are ten passes in the middle stretch, the most famous being Khawok Pass (11,640 feet), which Alexander the Great used; Qipchak Pass (13,900 feet), by which Baber Khan crossed; and Shibar Pass (9,800 feet), used by Genghis Khan.

The ridges are bare, wind-swept reaches covered with grass, well thinned from centuries of unrestrained grazing. There are miles and miles of rounded domes of mountains lying against distant peaks flecked with snow. Deep gorges run gray-green water. Range after range roll on and on like endless waves. Here is the quiet of the desert with no music of the trees to break the solitude. Here are vast lonely stretches where man can ride for days on end and see nothing but precipitous canyons, distant peaks, and wrinkled ridges that run to the horizon. This country, little known and seldom explored, is a place wild and desolate with a grandeur that is exotic.

A great upthrust shows schists, slate, limestone, lava, granite, conglomerates, and sandstone mixed in strange patterns. There are orderly stackings of rocks, as neat as any bricklayer would make. Other cliffs show rock formations twisted and turned into gigantic whorls. A stream cutting through a gorge discloses great slices of sandstone turned on end or at an angle. There are up-thrusts that bend and form fishhooks; there are thin slices of layer cakes; there are

flourishes of undisciplined fingers in mud. There is the mark of frenzy on the rocks—the frenzy of violent forces turning the world topsy-turvy in order to be released from a torment of heat and of pressure down below. Somehow the record of that frenzy has been preserved as if the end of the struggle came before victory had been achieved.

But the weird formations which the middle stretch of the Hindu Kush shows are secondary to the color of the rocks. We may have equals in our own Southwest, but I have seen nothing more beautiful than what the Hindu Kush discloses. These rocks are filled with yellow, red, green, pink, and purple. The air is so clear, the sun so brilliant, that every color, every shade is emphasized. One afternoon while I was exploring a canyon, the angle of the sun set a cliff ablaze. I stopped and sat on a rock watching the view. At least eighteen different colors or shades appeared. It was as fascinating, as exciting as any movie. I sat entranced for a half hour or more, watching mauve chase purple, a harsh yellow turn to a soft gold, a delicate pink slowly possess green. This is commonplace in the Hindu Kush. Every sunset turns peaks from gray to pink to gold to mauve. Every sunset turns the Hindu Kush into mountains of magic.

Hindu Kush means Killer of Hindus. Bloody events gave that beautiful range the ugly name. The Hindu Kush, running as it does across the northern part of Afghanistan, was a protection against the mass migrations of people from Central Asia. Population movements from the north turned west when they met the Hindu Kush and poured on to the Middle East and to Europe. The Hindu Kush deflected these vast human tides as a jetty deflects a stream. And the great trade route—the one followed by Marco Polo—kept north of these mountains. But the Hindu Kush, high and mighty as it is, did not stop the invaders.

These invaders, whom I have already mentioned, swept down from the north to raid and pillage India and at times to convert Hindus into Moslems. These invaders were for the most part herders. They were not interested in settling a region or in expanding their agricultural holdings. They were interested in conquest and the wealth which conquest brought. Perhaps they swept south because amicable relations with the traders broke down and they were cut off from their normal supply of grain, textiles, and the like. Climate and food may have been responsible, or insecurity owing to the forces of erosion that whip the soil from the roots of grass and make sandstone cliffs crumble to cover the earth with sterile dust. Whatever the cause, the Aryans, the Moguls, and the Moslems who swept into India from the northwest ravished the people of the plains, plundered their temples and homes, and carried thousands upon thousands of slaves back with them to their northern haunts. Thousands of these poor souls died

from the cold and high altitude of the passes of the Hindu Kush. These mountains became the notorious killer of the people of the plains, whose bodies were not adjusted to the thin air and rigors of the high mountains. This historic name is now being changed. The common cause which the Afghans and the Hindus have against the Pakistanis has led to a renaming of the range. In July 1951, officials in Kabul told me that, in deference to the sensibilities of the Hindus, the Hindu Kush would hereafter be known as the Hindu Kuh (Hindu Mountain).

There is beauty not only in the Hindu Kush but in most of central and northern Afghanistan. Kabul, the capital, means "sheepfold." It was a small village when Alexander the Great invaded the land. Now it has a population of 250,000. It lies 6,000 feet high in a green basin surrounded by broken remnants of hills heavily wrinkled from the erosion of wind and water. The basin is lush with apricots, cherries, crab apples, wheat, barley, melons, and many vegetables. The summers are delightful, the morning air being clear and cool. The days are hot, but not oppressive. By night the wind has picked up dust and filled the skies, making the surrounding hills indistinct and remote. But by morning the air is cool and clear again.

The valleys that lead out of Kabul are as green and as well kept as gardens and frequently shaken by earthquakes that send tremors down from the Hindu Kush and Karakorams. I went north from Kabul by car to Charikar, a thriving village of perhaps 10,000 people whose bazaars hum with activity. There are Sikhs and Hindus with stalls of brightly colored fabrics, mostly prints. Cobblers make and repair shoes with frenzied hammering and put into the soles of leather sandals the heavy, large-headed tacks that lie in the dust of most Afghan highways, waiting for automobile tires to pick them up. I stopped at a small stall where a bright-eyed young man made simple, sturdy knives by hand. I bought apricots from a fruit vendor in a lane where the smell of fresh fruit and of rice and lamb being stewed filled the place. Eager, interested, friendly, polite villagers gathered round at every stop to ask about me and to learn of the outside world.

At Charikar we picked up the Matuk River, a wide, roaring stream full of clay and silt and carrying the last of the runoffs of snow from the Hindu Kush. A ten-year-old boy stood on a gravel shore with a rod of willow, a line made of twine, a hook that was a good No. 4, and pieces of fish for bait. He hauled in before my eyes a thrashing, fighting, twenty-one-inch rainbow trout, and his hands trembled and his eyes danced as he took it from the hook and held it before me.

The valley of the Matuk has great charm. The roaring, milky Matuk waters every bench and lowland along its course. Every inch of ground has been planted to corn, wheat, rice, or Persian clover. There are mulberry trees and almonds. In July the edges of the fields show

yarrow, morning-glories, chicory, and hollyhocks. The flat-roofed houses with walls of stone and mud often run up steep slopes in several stories in order to save for cultivation a small plot along the river's edge.

The canyon narrows and the Matuk shrinks as the road nears the Shibar Pass. Now it is a twisting, winding defile with little space left for any farming operation. The cliffs rise straight and steep, showing limestone, sandstone, and granite. At the foot of the Shibar, where the Matuk is a trickle, there is a small bazaar with perhaps a dozen stalls against a hill. There is no tree, no touch of green. One looks up bare, rocky slopes two thousand feet or more to the towering mountaintop. The teahouses in the bazaar have small open platforms where great samovars sit in the summertime. I sat there in the sun and drank tea, talking with a smiling proprietor about Afghanistan and its problems. The other proprietors and hangers-on gathered round and politely listened to our talk of Communism, education, good roads, landownership, crops, and the weather.

The road climbs steeply, winding along the edges of cliffs, swinging in cutbacks across rugged slopes, rising to a crest, and then dropping to narrow canyons, only to climb again. When at last we reached the Shibar, we were in a broad, flat saddle that ran for several miles, with snowy peaks showing on either side. There were scattered patches of coarse grass that had been closely cropped. Some areas on this rolling saddle had been scratched by plows and sown to wheat. The wheat, thin and skimpy, looked sad and forlorn—sub-marginal plantings that would yield precious few bushels to the acre.

The road dropped into a canyon that got narrower and narrower for twenty miles or more. Now the walls of the canyon were squeezed so close there often was little land to till and none tilled. On the south side of the Shibar, the green river bottoms had stood like oases between dry hills—pretty much like the valleys of central California near Paso Robles. On the north side of the Shibar the contrasts were slightly different—dark green river bottoms against barren hillsides, gray-green water under purple and red cliffs, and a winding streak of fields and orchards that ran like a lush furrow down a dry, winding mountain defile.

Bamian was once a famous town on the caravan route (known as the Silk Road) that crawled over the Hindu Kush to India. In ancient days it was famous for asafetida, which was collected there and brought south by the caravans. Today it is a small village of a few dozen mud huts. It is a quiet, restful spot. The valley is several miles wide and rich in cereals, Persian clover, and beans. There are miles of poplar trees along the roads. Mulberry trees seem to be in every yard and at the corners of most fields. The Hindu Kush shows jagged

fingers of snow-flecked peaks in the east.

Bamian was not only an ancient trading post; it was an importent religious center as well. By the seventh century A.D. the Buddhist religion had spread through northern Afghanistan, crossed the Hindu Kush, and followed the Kabul River eastward. We know that from the reports of Hsuan Tsang, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim who traveled this way. Buddhism and Greek culture became mixed over the centuries. Alexander the Great left a kingdom behind that had a profound effect. It was originally established at Balkh, north of the Hindu Kush and not far from the Oxus. But the tides of Tartars moving from the north became too strong for the Macedonians to control. The Greeks moved south and east and settled in and along the edges of the Indus Valley. I saw in the museum at Kabul some results of the Greek absorption in Afghan culture. There have been excavated (mostly at Hadda) many statues from the third and fourth centuries A.D. The headdress is Buddhist; the noses are Greek.

In the seventh century, Bamian was a great center of Buddhist learning. It had long been the site of a famous Buddhist monastery, its establishment antedating the birth of Christ.

On the west of the valley is a sandstone cliff several hundred feet high and a quarter mile or more long. Its face is straight up and down; and on it have been carved three historic figures—Buddha, Buddha's wife, and Buddha's child. These are gigantic figures, the one of Buddha being 53 meters, or about 175 feet high. The cliffs into which these statues have been carved are dotted with caves or catacombs, built without apparent design or symmetry. They were in part shrines, in part rooms where the lamas lived. There must have been hundreds of lamas here, for the place is a vast one. There must have been chapels at the base of the great cliff where Buddhist services were held. There must have been great courtyards for the lama dances. And the echoes of the huge horns of the Buddhist monasteries must have echoed and re-echoed off the high cliffs.

Today all this can only be imagined. The base of the cliff has been leveled; no remnants of buildings remain. There are only rocks and rubble that leave no trace even of ancient foundations. There are no Buddhists left to make modern Bamian a holy shrine. Only the gaunt caves in the cliff remain—the caves and the figures carved there. It is a sad and desolate spot. The only sign of activity—apart from the starlings and pigeons that nest in the cliff—is a spot at the south end marked by a few trees. Here are a table and a few chairs, where the local judge sits to handle disputes among the villagers and to administer justice.

On the opposite side of the valley—across the Bamian River—is another high cliff, and at its southern end a hill rises. It is a small hill,

a few hundred feet high and having perhaps ten acres at the top. It was once a city—Shahr-I-Ghulghulla (the City of Noise). Like many cities in this region, it had the safety of a fort. But its security, like most security, was illusory. It too fell and hardly a stone is left to tell the story of its glory and activity. By day it is a nondescript rock pile. By moonlight one can almost imagine a bustling, thriving city standing opposite a beautiful, secluded monastery where the sacred mantra, *Om Mani Padme Hoom*, once filled the place with a hum.

The swords of Islam that carried the faith to Kabul and then over the Khyber Pass to the plains of India about the middle of the seventh century also carried it north over the Shibar. They came with fervor and vengeance and, as in retribution for some dark sin, fell upon the holy men of Bamian and slew them. They slew the lamas and burned the libraries. The Moslems, however, were not vandals. They came with a mission; their aim was to convert the people to Islam. They succeeded, for by the ninth century there was not a Buddhist left in Afghanistan.

It was much later that real terror and destruction hit Bamian. In A.D. 1220 Genghis Khan stood before Bamian with his Mongol hordes. It is said that Genghis Khan had no mission except death and plunder; that he came with no religion to sell, no trade routes to open, no revenge to wreak. The chronicles say that his mission was destruction—destruction not as a means to an end, not as a necessary consequence of a holy or humanitarian or commercial project, but as an end in itself.

He swept east for food and the plunder that would purchase food. He was ruthless in Mongol fashion and utterly destroyed any opposition. But he left behind for a century and a half a peaceful and united Asia. The local and regional quarrels ended. A sense of security settled over the land—a security not known before or since. Tribesmen in Central Asia still talk about it. They say that in the days of Genghis Khan a virgin, bedecked with jewels and without escort, could travel in safety from the Volga to Peking. Genghis Khan, dead for nearly eight hundred years, is still remembered in Central Asia not for his acts of destruction but for the unified empire he built and maintained.

At Bamian, Genghis Khan lost a grandson in battle, and in his anger ordered an assault that was not abandoned until the city fell. Every living person in the pleasant green valley was killed. All the buildings were pulled down, including the mosques built by the Moslems after they had substituted Mohammed for Buddha. The destruction was so great that even the Mongols called it Mou-baligh, the City of Sorrow. Genghis Khan, wiping the blood of Bamian off his hands, sped south, poured over the Khyber, and got his troops as far east as Lahore

before the force spent itself.

This history crowded my mind as I poked among the ruins of ancient Bamian and walked its dusty streets. One night I sat on the hill where the City of Noise once thrived, while Faqir told me a story that went back to the siege of Bamian by Genghis Khan. A girl who was a member of the royal Afghan family fell in love with one of Genghis Khan's generals. She betrayed Bamian by saying that if the water supply were cut off, the enemy could infiltrate the ancient city through the empty pipes. But the Mongol general did not marry the girl after all; in fact, he killed her on the eve of their wedding. "A woman who was dangerous to many men would be more dangerous to one."

The moon was almost full and shone with a brilliance we do not know in the United States. The great hulk of the mighty Buddha clouded with darkness stood opposite me. The village was black, not a light showing. The chill north wind that usually comes up in early evening had died down. The distant peaks of the Hindu Kush were vague and indistinct. There was not a sound to break the stillness of this bright night until suddenly a donkey far below me brayed. His agonizing groans filled the valley, and there were echoes after he had ended.

It seemed to me his noise symbolized the suffering of the people—the agony and sorrow they had endured, the sacrifices they had been forced to make by the conquerors who came this way. The braying of the donkey seemed also to express the long-suffering qualities of the race. Invaders came and went; cities fell; death was on every side. But new life took the place of the old. The bean patches at Bamian are still lush, and the people, though they look north with nervous eyes, as their forebears did, work and pray and raise their families and find time for laughter and singing.

Conditions in Afghanistan are somewhat primitive. The roads are dirt. The plows are wooden and pulled by cows. There are few telephones, radios, or telegraph stations. Automobiles are scarce, transportation being handled by camels and donkeys. Except in a few houses in Kabul, there is no indoor plumbing, no piped water systems.

Afghanistan—a state the size of Texas with a population of twelve million people—lies distant and remote from the outside world. It has no railroad, no seaport. It is landlocked in a pocket surrounded by Persia, Russia, and Pakistan.

Afghanistan is a monarchy. The Senate (60 members) is appointed by the King. The House of Representatives (120 members) is elected by the people. The Cabinet is chosen by the Senate with the approval of the King. One who steps into Afghanistan therefore steps back a thousand years in more ways than one.

But for all of that, the country is one of the most exciting in the world. It occupies one of the most strategic areas in the East and serves as the route for every invader who wants to reach India. Afghanistan has been the base camp of every power which, having taken India, desired to hold it. Geography has made Afghanistan the great crossroads between north and south, east and west.

Its location, its strategic importance, the grandeur of the Hindu Kush make it one of the most interesting places in the world to visit. Its people make it one of the most fascinating.

It was at Bamian that I first heard a man singing from a tree-top. He apparently was a goatherd who climbed a poplar while his flock grazed. When I came his way, he burst into song. He had a beautiful baritone and he sang an exciting aria. He sang until it seemed he would burst.

A teen-age boy sat on the banks of the Bamian River, also singing his heart out. He sang of unrequited love in a lovely tenor voice.

> *Oh, sweetheart, I am ill.*
> *All the men come to see me*
> *But not a word from you.*

That same afternoon I heard in the distance the faint music of a flute. It was a sad, haunting melody. The flute player was an artist, for he could make the notes sound like water falling from a high crag in the Hindu Kush.

I found him in the bazaar in Bamian. He was an elderly man who walked with a cane. His gray beard, white turban, and deep-set eyes gave him a priestly appearance. His name was Mohammed Hossein. He played two songs for me—"Song of the Mountains" and a Pathan song entitled "The Four Waltzes." A high wind had come up, swirling dust and making it impossible to use my tape recorder outdoors. A villager invited me to use his house. Mohammed Hossein, Faqir Mohmand, and I went in. Before I could set up my machine, at least thirty men and boys found us. The room—twelve by fourteen feet, without any windows—was packed. It was so crowded I could hardly find room for the flute player and my recorder. Mohammed Hossein played at least an hour for me. At each stop I applauded and the crowd eagerly joined me.

When I had finished, I wanted to pay Mohammed Hossein. The bare suggestion of it hurt the old man, as I saw at once from his sensitive face. I was a guest and he the host. He was a poor man, an illiterate man. But he had the grace and the charm of royalty. He truly represented the generous and warm heart of the Afghans.

One day Faqir and I stopped at the village of Chardah Ghurband, south of Bamian, for lunch. The teahouse was on a platform about

three feet off the ground, open on two sides and covered with a trellis of grapes. The kitchen was at one end of the platform, presided over by a dark, genial, sharp-featured man. There were a dozen or more tables under the trellis and quite a few beds. This was a place where those who followed caravan routes stretched out for their siesta. The cook was an accomplished person who prepared rice cooked with lamb and also a lamb dish with a tasty sauce (*kurma*). We had bread and tea with the main course. And the cook sent his son to the hillside behind the teahouse to bring us freshly picked mulberries.

As in all my stops, the Afghans gathered politely around and we had a seminar in politics, agriculture, and the rights of man. Some of their faces had Mongol traces. These were the Uzbeks from the north, brothers of the Uzbeks in Russian Turkestan. Most of them had the finely chiseled features of the Aryans. There are those who say the Afghans are children of Israel, descended from the tribe of Benjamin. Others hotly deny it, pointing out that the Pukhto language, which derives from the Iranian and has many Arabic, Persian, and Tartar words, has no Hebrew. The Afghans are mostly tall and angular and inclined to sparseness, like the Persians. Pukhto is their main language.

At Chardah Ghurband I put together much that I had learned from Kabul to Bamian. Here I heard old stories retold, new episodes related, and the picture of life under the rim of Russia rounded out.

My questions always returned to Soviet propaganda and the art of proselytizing, in which the Communists have excelled. But I learned that, at least through 1951, the Communists were as inactive in Afghanistan as they were in Ladakh. There were no Communist provocateurs among the people. There was no literature being distributed. Moscow did not beam radio programs to the Afghans. Moscow left the Afghans strangely alone.

Afghanistan has a trade agreement with Russia, recently renewed, under which large movements of goods take place. Afghanistan sells cotton, wool, and some food to Russia. Russia gives in return machinery, matches, manufactured goods, and gasoline. The gasoline from Russia fills half of Afghanistan's annual requirements—150,000 gallons a month. It is rationed, and the retail price is seventy-three cents a gallon. In the summer of 1951 there was black-market gasoline in Kabul for two dollars a gallon, the price having recently dropped from five dollars.

But the Soviet's attitude toward Afghanistan is in all respects proper and correct. Even the trade agreement is not used for leverage or influence. Perhaps it is because there are no stakes in oil or other precious minerals in Afghanistan, as there are in Persia, to excite the Communists' fervor. Perhaps Russia knows that Afghanistan, which

lies in a remote pocket of Asia far removed from friends and allies, can be occupied any week and hence need not be conditioned for political capture. Whatever the reason, Afghanistan is one Asian country whose government is not whipped by Soviet propaganda, whose people are not stirred to discontent by Communist agitators, whose politics are not infected with the virus of Communism.

The villages and teahouses of Afghanistan made one thing abundantly clear: not more than a tenth of one per cent of the people were conscious of political problems. Pakhtunistan was one exception. They knew about it and talked about it. But even that issue, important as it was to the fiery Pathans, did not stir the average villager deeply. It had emerged in his political consciousness, but it had not possessed him.

The only other issue that was beginning to be heard in the villages in 1951 was the Awakened Youth Movement. This is a loose, informally organized group which protests against an ancient condition. Land reform, irrigation and hydroelectric developments, better roads, better housing, education, public health, and the other issues that have turned today's revolutions loose on Asia are secondary. The Awakened Youth Movement is primarily advocating a constitutional monarchy, a reduction of the power and status of the King to the symbol of ancient glory such as the King of England. But their message has few reverberations in the villages. Discontent does not ride high. There is mostly quiet on and under the surface of village life. In 1951 the Awakened Youth Movement had produced only one issue that disturbed the villagers at Chardah Ghurband.

A prominent leader of the movement is Ghulam Hassan Safi. He was arrested and charged with conduct sacrilegious under Islamic law. His offense would be surprising to those of us raised in the tradition of the separation of church and state, for all that Ghulam Hassan Safi proposed was that government funds be used to build public schools rather than mosques. He was tried and acquitted of that charge but convicted on a lesser one—disorderly conduct. In July 1951, he was in jail in Kabul; and his confinement was making him the people's martyr all the way north to Bamian.

But these were minor disturbances of the peace and quiet of Afghanistan in 1951. No revolution had touched the land; there was no element of disequilibrium operating to disturb the status quo. The villagers may have known about Communism, though they had no learned articles, no parliamentary debates, no radio broadcasts, no newspapers to inform them. They knew about Soviet Russia and Communism only from the Moslems who lived in Russia and who escaped over the border. I did not meet any of the refugees. But there seemed to be occasional ones who streaked down from the north,

leaving tales of terror and confiscation in the teahouses as they went.

Whatever the cause, the peasants of Afghanistan look to the north with suspicion and misgivings. The Soviets are neither loved nor trusted. The trade routes run north and south, but that is a matter of expediency. Russia is not considered a friend; she is not the guardian; she is not the good neighbor. Russia is the powerful neighbor whose perilous proximity creates fear. The glances to the north are always nervous glances.

Perhaps this is one reason why the Afghans look to the West for friendship and help. Perhaps this is one reason why the westerner is so warmly welcomed.

The influence of Kabul is clearly on the side of the West. It has a nucleus of enlightened young men, educated in America and bent on reform, who are tackling the illiteracy problem (85 per cent of the people can neither read nor write). They are starting by establishing a school for the mullahs; they plan to educate the priests and make them teachers of the modern way of life, using the fifteen thousand mosques of the country as educational centers. There already are five hundred elementary public schools. Engineering and trade schools are being promoted. This group of young enlightened Afghans is tackling the problem of government efficiency and honesty by trying to get government salaries increased. They are behind a women's welfare organization that is dedicated to the emancipation of women and the recognition of feminine rights. A new modern highway has been built from Kandahar to Chaman on the Pakistan border. A few irrigation and hydroelectric projects are under way on the Arghandab and the Helmand rivers. These are being constructed by the Morrison-Knudsen Company of Boise, Idaho. Kabul, like the villages, looks to the West rather than to Russia for inspiration and guidance. The Afghans are borrowing ideas from us, not from their powerful neighbor across the Oxus River.

I had gone to Afghanistan with misgivings. The literature I had read, the tales I had heard made me uneasy. I was told that it was a nation of brigands and thieves. I remembered the ancient saying, "Kabuli grapes are sweet, Kabuli horses are swift, Kabuli women are fair, but a Kabuli thief is a son of Satan." I had heard tell of the murderous Pathans and the wild and treacherous men of the hills. I was told that it was not even safe to go unarmed into the bazaars, that unless one had an armed escort he was tempting fate.

That was rank libel. The Afghans are the most friendly and hospitable people I have met. One could go to any Afghan home and be warmly received. He would get the best food the family had to offer. The house would be his home, though he were a total stranger. If there were only one room, it would be turned over to him.

The Afghan women, to be sure, are remote and aloof, as in most Moslem countries. They are completely covered with blue or saffron burkhas that drop to their ankles. The hood of the burkha has openings for the eyes; but these are commonly covered with a coarse netting. The foreigner does not get to know the women, who, though completely masters inside their homes, play no part in the social life of the country.

The Afghan men whom one meets in the villages are simple folks—honest and trusting. They dress for the most part in white, blue, or red turbans, loose white trousers, roomy white coats that hang to the knees, and heavy brown wool vests or short-sleeved coats over the white ones. In the winter, boots are worn, for then central and northern Afghanistan lies heavy with snow. But in the summer the men wear sandals. They are warmhearted, generous, and tolerant. I went among them alone and unarmed, with no badge to mark my rank or to identify me. They knew only that I was an American; and I received nothing but kindness.

The friendliness of the Afghan is represented in the greeting which he gives even the stranger. I heard it in every village and along every road. "*Staray mashy. Staray mashy*."

I asked Faqir what it meant.

"May you never be tired," he replied, his eyes smiling.

"And what am I supposed to say in response?"

"*Kwar mashy*."

"And what does that mean?"

"May you never be poor."

May you never be tired! May you never be poor! These are the greetings on Russia's southern border. These are the greetings of men who are not yet in the vortex of Asian politics, who do not yet know what horrors Communist cunning and deceit can produce. These are greetings that go back to the beginning, to the time when men lived unto themselves, content with their daily work and the love of their families. We of the West have all the refinements of civilization, all the dividends of a mounting standard of living. But the Afghans—one thousand years behind us in many respects—have a warmth of human relations that is often missing all the way from New York City to San Francisco.

The Afghans are the most friendly and hospitable people I have met.

The cliffs near Bamian had long been the site of a famous Buddhist monastery, its establishment antedating the birth of Christ.

The people of the East had known the Khyber Pass as an awful funnel through which fury and destruction repeatedly whirled.

The Mir of Hunza and the Mir of Nagir are absolute monarchs who rule with firm hands.

There are no Buddhists left to make the place a shrine or holy place. Only the gaunt caves in the cliff remain, the caves and the figures carved there.

Mohammed Hossein was an artist, for he could make the notes sound like water falling from a high crag in the Hindu Kush.

Chapter 3
A Lizard And A King

I went to Swat without invitation or announcement, and to my pleasure and surprise had dinner with the King. The trip was as unexpected as the dinner, and both developed quite by accident.

It happened this way. Abdul and I had threaded our way through the canyons and defiles of the Khyber Pass and were now roaring along on a straight paved road across the flat plains, headed for Peshawar. It had been unbearably hot from Jalalabad, Afghanistan, to Torcha on the Pakistan border. The temperature was well over 120 degrees, and even the air from the moving car stung like a furnace blast. The higher altitude of the Khyber had brought some relief, but its rocks had the heat of many days in them, and its narrow defiles where we stopped for pictures were roasting ovens. Now the sun was low, touching the horizon, and the air was cool. Abdul loosened his collar; I, mine. We were comfortable for the first time since leaving Kabul.

In the hottest stretches we had sat mostly in silence. But the cool evening air picked up our spirits. The quiet and reserved Abdul was now jabbering away in broken English, like a schoolboy just released from an ordeal. He talked of the brave Pathans and the fighting they had done in the Khyber. He sang the praises of the Afridis. He said he would be happy to get to Peshawar. I asked why anyone would be happy to get to such a hot, stifling place when Kabul at six thousand feet was so delightfully cool.

“My wife,” Abdul replied. “I did not see her for weeks.” And with that he turned to me, grinning, and then stepped on the gas. The Chevrolet fairly flew along the asphalt.

We were going due east. To the north was a hulk of land, a low range that pressed against the horizon. Pointing to it, I asked Abdul what was there.

“Swat,” he replied. “Malakand and Swat.”

“The Sultan of Swat?” I asked.

“Sultan of Swat,” he said. “Maybe you call him Sultan. I call him Wali.”

I laughed out loud, and then I teased Abdul. Had he heard of Babe Ruth? Babe Ruth was the Sultan of Swat. He had lived in the United States. I ended by saying, “Abdul, you must be mistaken. The Sultan of

Swat was a great American. Everyone in my country knew him, and we all loved him. He never was in Pakistan. And now he's dead."

"No, no," he insisted. "Wali lives there." And when he took his right hand off the wheel to emphasize the point, we almost left the highway. I still must have sounded skeptical, for Abdul added, "If you do not believe, I will take you."

And that is the way my journey to Swat was conceived. When Abdul left me that evening at Dean's Hotel in Peshawar, he agreed to be back in the morning at eight o'clock to drive me the one hundred miles to Saidu, the capital of Swat. Abdul, true to his word as always, was knocking on my door at the appointed hour. But this time his face had a worried look.

"Sahib, the trip to Swat in the daytime will be nice. But at night when we come back, maybe you get shot."

"Who will shoot me?"

"Robbers. Many bad robbers at night."

I laughed and, putting my hands on Abdul's shoulders, I said, "Robbers? Abdul and I are not afraid of them."

"Sahib get shot," Abdul answered, shaking his head. "That is bad."

"What do you suggest?"

Then the plan unfolded. Abdul had a friend called Ammnullah. Ammnullah had a high-powered rifle and was a very good marksman. If I hired Ammnullah, he could sit up front with Abdul. Everyone would see the rifle; no one would shoot us.

"How would they see the rifle at night?" I asked.

"At night Ammnullah shoot first."

That is how I hired Ammnullah for fifteen rupees (five dollars) for a day's work as my bodyguard. It took us a couple of hours to find Ammnullah. We went into one of the bazaar sections of Peshawar and stopped at a shop advertising (in English) guns and ammunition. The sun was getting close to noon when Ammnullah appeared. He was the most unsuspecting gunman I ever saw—a fat boy in his teens with a round, cheery face and a gold ring in his right ear. It appeared that his father, who owned the shop, would have to give approval for Ammnullah's absence. Ammnullah was gone perhaps an hour on that mission. He returned smiling, with a carbine under his arm.

Off we went, Ammnullah up front with Abdul, the two of them chattering away in Pukhto. After a few blocks Abdul turned the car around and went back to the gun shop.

"Ammnullah says robbers very bad. Need two guns."

"Why two?"

"Rifle for long shots. Revolver for close fighting."

As Abdul talked, Ammnullah kept nodding his head, his face very serious. In my mind's eye I could see bandits firing at us behind rocks,

their bullets whistling around us. I could see Ammnullah bravely pumping the carbine, blazing away. I could see the battle going slowly against us, the bandits closing in. Now they were at the car's door. Ammnullah, as if reading my mind, used his finger as a gun and in pantomime slew each desperado as he approached. I remembered the ancient and vivid stories of India's Thugs who searched out important people on the highways in order to murder them and then to strip the bodies and divide the spoils. I began to wonder how deep the institution of Thuggee (Taylor and Brown, *The Confessions of a Thug*) actually went in modern Pakistan.

In a few minutes Ammnullah was back with a .45 pistol and a belt heavy with bullets. He laid these on his lap and held the carbine in his right hand, its butt on the floor of the car. That is the way we went to Swat.

This armament project that Abdul and Ammnullah laid on me was a completely fraudulent scheme. We were attacked only once, and that was on the way in. As we were rounding a corner on the winding road below Malakand a man, apparently deranged, who had been hiding behind a huge boulder where a spring oozed from the ground, stepped out and threw a rock as big as a coconut at us. It was a clear miss. Abdul shouted, "Crazy man," and both he and Ammnullah laughed.

We returned from Swat in the dead of night. All the way back Ammnullah sat in the front seat with the .45 on his lap and the carbine between his legs. On the way up he had been talkative and lively. On the way back he never said a word; in fact, he never once moved. His eyes were closed and his snoring told of his contentment. Ammnullah, my bodyguard, went through the land of brigands and highwaymen sound asleep. When we pulled up at Dean's Hotel at Peshawar about 2 A.M., I told Abdul that I really had been robbed. Abdul's face at first was puzzled; but then even he, the co-conspirator, saw the humor of the situation when I said, "Tell Ammnullah that he certainly handled those highway robbers with courage."

To return to the story: we left Peshawar in the Chevrolet shortly after noon. It was sizzling hot in the sun, the thermometer hovering around 110 degrees. The sun felt as if it were pouring through a burning glass. There was no breath of air. A few porters passed by with heavy loads on their backs, balanced by head straps that were soaked with perspiration. But most men—even the dark-skinned ones—kept to the shade. The hum of the bazaar was low. Almost everyone was a refugee from the sun.

The asphalt road out of Peshawar went west for a few dozen miles and then turned north. The asphalt was so hot it was soft and sticky even in the shade. The hignway was in fact in shade for miles on end. It was a covered highway—covered with tamarisk trees whose boughs

were so long they touched. From the air (where I later saw it) the highway looked like a green winding tunnel that some giant mole had pushed up across the plain.

There was very little traffic on the highway. The vast stretches of sugar cane that reached as far as the eye could see were vacant and breathless. Water buffalo and Brahma bulls (the kind we see in our western rodeos) stood tethered to willow trees with ropes through their noses. A band of sheep that had been traveling a great distance along the highway lay panting in the shade of a tamarisk. Abdul stopped to fix a tire; and I joined the animals by the side of the road. A big crow—the white-collared bird that serves as scavenger on the plains of India and Pakistan—sat on the back of one water buffalo, feasting on lice that covered the animal. People and animals alike lay in the shade as if drugged by the hot, sleepy air.

Just before we reached the edge of the plain where the road climbs the two-thousand-foot escarpment of rock to Malakand, there is a sprawling village where Abdul stopped the car. It was one of the most unattractive places I had ever seen. The hot, windless day produced a fecal odor that permeated everywhere. There was shade where we stopped; but the stench of the spot made the shade seem unbearable. Filth was piled deep. The mud huts, the dilapidated bazaars, the thin and miserable people had an oppressive effect on me. Abdul was thirsty and stopped for a drink. “Water, sherbet, ice?” he asked, turning to me. I shook my head, though a drink of cold water was what I wanted more than anything.

As I thought of my thirst, I thought of Gunga Din. I did not appreciate until later that it was Malakand Pass that Gunga Din had made famous—the top of the low-lying ridge that lay immediately ahead of us. But this day I did think of the hot, baking rocks where the British Tommy lay when he was shot and his anguished call to Gunga Din, “For Gawd’s sake git the water, Gunga Din!”

It was as if in answer to my thoughts that Abdul returned, grinning and carrying in his hand a pitcher of water with a big piece of ice sticking out of it. Where he had gotten the ice I could not imagine. It was the most tempting sight I had seen in my Asian journeys. Yet, hardened as I was to food and water in this part of the world, I dared not take this drink. The water may not have been crawling, but it was green. And the fecal odor that filled the place gave a warning. I shook my head and Abdul drank it all without stopping, a quart of water that spilled over and ran down his chin and dripped on his soiled, cotton shirt. Then came Ammnullah with another pitcher and the same plea. And he too quaffed the cold green water before me. And their great satisfaction almost made me regret my refusal.

Soon we were climbing the escarpment where Abdul’s crazy man

heaved a rock at us—the height which Winston Churchill knew as a young lieutenant and which he memorialized in the Malakand Field Force. To our right was the Malakand River tumbling down steep cliffs through hydroelectric turbines installed by the British. On top were the tree-lined streets of Malakand, refreshingly cool after the plains. And not far out of Malakand we came to the dirt road that marks the entrance to the Kingdom of Swat.

There are several separate states or principalities which have not been integrated into West Pakistan. Swat, Dir, and Chitral (under the old Malakand Agency of the British) and Hunza and Nagir (under the Gilgit Agency) are in that group. Dir has perhaps the fiercest warriors. They have recently seen service in the Kashmir dispute. It is the Diri that throws his rifle away and uses his terrible sword against the enemy's automatic weapons. Each of these states has a long history of warring and fighting. But of all the independent kingdoms in the great Northwest, Swat is the most enterprising and progressive.

Swat is eighty miles long and forty miles wide with a population of 562,000 people. Its central valley, where the Swat River runs, is as fertile and pleasant as our Connecticut River Valley. The river at this point is a broad, purling stream that waters hundreds of rich rice fields. The elevation is around two thousand feet. But the eastern end of Swat nestles in the Himalayas (in a spur known locally as the White Mountains) and rises to twenty-two thousand feet.

Swat grows rice, wheat, barley, and corn in the valleys and has an annual exportable balance of grain of sixteen thousand tons. It has on the hills a wide variety of fruits—apricots, cherries, peaches, and apples. There are partridge, pheasant, boar, leopards, deer, goats, and ibex in the mountains. The mountains have quiet ridges of pine and fir, long slopes ideal for skiing, crags and peaks inviting to adventurers.

Swat is an enterprising place. It has three hundred miles of dirt roads, most of them as excellent as Vermont's. During summer months water sprinklers lay the dust of these roads. Swat has efficient irrigation systems, quite a few telephones, a good telegraph system, numerous American automobiles, radios, refrigerators, and flush toilets. It has an excellent hotel at Saidu, accommodating fifty guests, where I stayed—high ceilings, electric fans, modern bath facilities. Swat is a busy, bustling place—a surplus-food area in a region where the total adds up to a deficit. Swat has an army of fourteen thousand militiamen and a string of eighty stockade-type forts. Swat is an absolute monarchy. It is not a part of Pakistan; but it acknowledges loyalty to it.

In the seventh century A.D. Hsuan Tsang, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, visited Swat and found Buddhism flourishing there. Swat was

a remote island in a tumble of high mountains, protected by high passes and rugged escarpments, and snug in its security. Alexander the Great had passed through Swat in 326 B.C. But the Moslem invaders had not penetrated so far. Swat had been left strangely alone for centuries.

The Hindu religion flourished in Swat alongside the Buddhist faith. Both built shrines and temples until almost every valley view of Swat was a religious site. Pilgrims traveled long trails and crossed high passes to visit this retreat and worship there. But these holy places were soon to pass, leaving only vague outlines of the stone foundations that supported them.

In the fifteenth century some Pathans, headed by the Yusafzais, infiltrated the country from the west, and in the sixteenth century attacked in earnest. They were Moslems. The Buddhists, committed to lives of non-violence, were easily conquered. Many fled east across the Indus River. New people poured in with the conquerors. These newcomers are largely the Swatis of today. They brought their Moslem religion with them.

Swat is tied to Pakistan primarily by the Moslem religion. The tie is political, not legal. But it is real and binding, the Wali paying the Pakistan government three thousand dollars a month as a token of his fealty. And someday Swat will doubtless evolve as a province of the great Moslem nation.

Present-day Swat was put together in 1917 by Miangul Gul Shahzada Abdul Wadud, father of the present Wali. He welded it out of twenty-four separate tribes which for years had fought and quarreled. Among them were the Ajjars, who ran goats; the Gujjars, who grazed buffaloes; the Kohistanis, who brought wood from the mountains. These and other tribes were always fighting and raiding. The khans exploited every dispute to their own advantage. Politics, plunder, and petty quarrels kept the country in an unhappy uproar. The father of the present Wali ended this anarchy and welded the tribes together. When he had succeeded in his military-political undertaking, the British recognized his authority. The British had established their hold over Peshawar in 1849, but they did not move against Swat until 1863. By 1896 they had a political agency in Swat; and it was they who encouraged the father of the present Wali to establish his authority over the twenty-four unruly tribes. The father only recently abdicated on account of his health and turned the affairs of Swat over to his son. I met the son, the present Wali (Miangul Abdul Haq Johan Zeb), who gave me one of the most interesting evenings I have known.

I had approached Saidu leisurely, taking pictures and stopping to talk with villagers. I had also been stopped by the militia at several

points for identification. So I did not reach Saidu until five o'clock. I went to the hotel, got a room, cleaned up, and was about to look up the manager to inquire about the Wali, when the manager came to see me. He said (in excellent English) that the Wali's secretary was waiting with a message.

The secretary was a tall dark man in his forties, immaculately dressed in dark western clothes with a wing collar and a flowing tie. He too spoke English and was most pleasant and affable. He said the Wali had heard of my arrival (apparently from the militia who had stopped me on the road) and wanted to tender me a dinner at the palace that night. I thanked the secretary and pointed with dismay at my clothes. My brown shoes still had the dust of Kabul on them; my seersucker suit had not been washed for a week and hung like a soiled rag; my white cotton shirt had wilted hours ago and was dirty and still damp from the long journey in the car; even the washable tie I wore was soiled. I pointed out to the secretary my sorry condition and explained that while I would be delighted to accept the Wali's invitation, I was not dressed for the occasion, nor did I have with me even a change of clothes. The secretary stated that while the others would be dressed in evening clothes, the Wali would understand if I came as I was.

And so it happened that I went to an affair of state in clothes I would hesitate to wear in any public place.

I inquired to see if I could buy a new dress shirt or a new suit. There was none in Saidu. I tried to buy a safety razor so that I could shave. But there was none. Then I put my problem to the pleasant manager of the hotel, and in a few minutes Mohammed called at my room.

Mohammed was a barber. He stood about five feet six inches and weighed perhaps one hundred pounds. He had a small head and a face that was expressionless and intent. He was smooth-shaven except for a small black mustache. His suit would easily have been mistaken for a pair of pajamas, and his feet were bare.

He had a small square box with him, covered with a soiled towel and filled with his barber's equipment and supplies. When he walked in I was sitting on the edge of the bed. He stood before me, bowed low, and placed his box on the floor. He wrapped the soiled towel around my neck, drew some water from the tap into a small cup, dipped a short-handled brush in the water, and then rubbed the brush furiously against a cake of soap. His feet were about four feet apart; and he stood so far from me that when he undertook to lather my face he could barely reach me. I have never experienced such a lathering. Mohammed rubbed my face with the stiff-haired brush until my skin burned. He rubbed each side at least five minutes. The rubbing seemed to produce more skin irritation than lather; the lather, if any,

was the dead, thin kind one gets from hand soap. But Mohammed was unconcerned; he only put renewed vigor into his project. He bore down on my face as though the Wali had decreed his death if he failed.

At long last Mohammed was ready for the shaving. He picked up an ancient, decrepit-looking straight razor, felt its edge with his thumb, and then honed it. (American barbers, please take notice.) He had no leather strop for this purpose. Mohammed was a rugged individual, a man of the hills, a resourceful, primitive man who knew only primitive methods. He used the palm of his left hand as a strop. It was at once apparent that Mohammed was no novice but an old hand at this business. He stropped vigorously for several minutes, never breaking the beat of the rhythm. And the razor he put to my face was as sharp and gentle as any I had ever known. He had to stop once or twice to put more lather on my face. And each time he rubbed so vigorously I thought I would have no skin left.

Finally he had the razor at my throat. At that moment I hoped Mohammed did not know his Koran or, if he did, that he did not take it literally. For the man whose illustrious name he bore had taught that the killing of the infidel was a noble and holy cause. But Mohammed was a craftsman to the end, intent only on giving the best shave that Swat could produce. When he finished he dipped the end of the dirty towel in the cup of water, scrubbed my face with it, and at last stood before me, bowing. I paid him one rupee for the shave and one rupee as a tip (about sixty cents all told), and Mohammed, silent to the end, bowed stiffly and left.

I took a bath in a big English tub with water drawn from taps. And by the time the Wali's car called for me, I was back in my soiled shirt and disreputable suit.

The palace is about a mile from the hotel and sits with it on a ridge that overlooks the broad Swat Valley. The palace, which is only a short distance back from the road, might have been any English-type house in the country. When the car stopped, I expected a footman to open the door. Not so. The man who opened the door for me was the Wali. He was dressed in white with a military-type coat that buttoned high and with a red sash around the waist. He spoke perfect English and greeted me in the quiet, affable manner with which one might be welcomed in the countryside of Essex.

The Wali stands about five feet eight. His broad shoulders and massive head make him seem stout and sturdy. His hair is mostly gone. He is clean-shaven and dark-complexioned. He is a warm, friendly person whose democratic attitude was apparent from his cordial and informal greeting on the steps of the palace.

The rooms of the palace are commodious, with high ceilings. The

drawing room where we sat sipping Coca-Cola and lemonade (the Wali, being Moslem, serves no cocktails) had Persian rugs on the floor and on the walls. There was an occasional Mogul painting, and cupboards showed ancient chinaware.

It was a dinner for six. No Moslem women were present, Swat being of the strict Sunni sect that keeps women in the background, neither seen nor heard. Two beautiful British ladies were there, wives of Pakistani officials, who were visiting Swat on a vacation. They were dressed in lovely sarees—one a brilliant red, one a soft turquoise blue. The men wore tuxedos—all except the Wali and me. And I was so unkempt I felt uncomfortable.

It was a seven-course dinner, starting with soup. I thought the rich iced pudding was the last course; but after it came *bundi*. These are sticks of grain about the size of a pencil, shaped like a pretzel, and cooked in deep fat. They are served with hot mustard and coffee and make a tasty end to a sumptuous feast.

It was a lively dinner conversation, during which we talked mostly of the problems of Swat.

The Wali is an absolute monarch. He has no bureaucracy; he handles all administrative problems by telephones that reach every official. He personally passes on dozens of petitions that come to him each day.

Swat has two systems of courts. Ecclesiastical courts presided over by mullahs (Moslem priests) handle all the civil cases. These courts apply Islamic law. A case cannot get into court merely on the initiative of the parties. As in ancient English history, a plaintiff must first petition the King for permission to sue. The Wali hears the petitioner and sometimes both sides. If he thinks the complaint is a substantial or serious one, he sends the parties to the mullah. Thus is the writ obtained.

Criminal courts apply the “customary law.” Criminal cases also start with the Wali. He first hears the charge and, if it seems to him to be meritorious, remits the prosecutor to the court. If it is a serious offense—highway robbery, offenses against strangers, political offenses—the Wali will hear the case himself. Most crimes are punished by fine. Murder is punished by handing the convicted murderer over to the victim’s family for such disposition they want to make of him. (The heirs of a deceased have a duty to kill the murderer. Revenge may be on the next of kin. When one kills a relative who took no part in the murder, the feud is at an end.)

“We have about twelve murders a year,” the Wali told me; and he went on to add, “Which I consider not too bad.”

There is a scale of damages for various injuries, a woman getting half the amount payable to a man. In case of adultery both parties are

killed. A rapist is also killed. A man caught stealing may be killed. An arsonist is guilty of murder if someone is killed in the fire.

There is an appellate court for criminal appeals. And the Wali sits as a court of final appeal in all cases.

"All cases begin and end with me," the Wali said.

"No murderer can be sentenced without your approval?"

"That's right."

"No fine can be collected unless you agree?"

"That's correct."

"No land can be distributed, no dispute over crops settled without your approval?"

"I must approve every judgment," the Wali added. "You see, I am an absolute monarch."

The Wali spoke of the great political program he has been developing for Swat. It is a program that reflects a lively social conscience. There is indeed a spiritual background of this monarchy that is unique. The great-grandfather of the Wali was Akhund of Swat, a holy man who chose Saidu as his retreat and there opened a free kitchen for the poor. It is at Saidu that Akhund is buried; and his tomb is a holy place. Saidu is indeed Holy Saidu, Saidu Sharif.

The kitchen that Akhund opened for the poor today feeds two meals a day to the pilgrims who visit the shrine. That kitchen has become the symbol of the forces that are bringing liberal reforms out of an absolute monarchy.

The Wali has established first-aid centers in every village and hospitals in the larger towns.

He has a nationwide school system leading to the university in Peshawar.

Up to a few years ago Swat had a land system known as *wesh* under which all cultivated land was rotated at regular intervals. The idea was to give each farmer an opportunity to farm the most fertile plot. *Wesh* is an ancient institution in this part of the world; it still exists among some of the Pathans in Afghanistan. The Wali's father abolished *wesh*. Since everyone knew he would lose the land at the end of the term, he made no improvements on it. Since *wesh* was abolished, production has increased considerably.

"A man needs incentive," the Wali said. "Private ownership. That's what the world needs."

The Wali believes in taking care of the poor. But he thinks it is more important to create conditions which will enable the poor to feed themselves. His concern is with increasing the productivity of the land, distributing the national income fairly, attending to the medical needs of his people, and providing for their education.

Conversation turned to other countries in Asia, including

Afghanistan. Someone asked if I had visited there. I said I had and that only yesterday I had driven from Kabul to Peshawar. When asked about the road, I replied that it was a very poor one. One of the British ladies spoke up and said, “I have traveled that road and it is awful. When you get back to the States there is one thing you must ask President Truman to do.”

“What is that?”

“Ask him to build a good road to Kabul.”

The Wali put his coffee cup down and, turning to me, said, “With apologies to this beautiful lady, let me say that I disagree.”

“Why?” she asked.

The Wali was silent for a while and then he said to the whole table, “These are dangerous days. The only thing that can save the world from Communism is a progressive, liberal social program.”

Turning to me, he said, “You have seen the great work I am doing in Swat—the schools, hospitals, road, modernization. That must be done everywhere.”

“That’s true,” said the British lady. “But what has that got to do with President Truman building a good road to Kabul?”

The voice of the Wali was now mounting; and what he said had a theatrical flourish. “It’s time we absolute monarchs got socially conscious. Let the King of Afghanistan build his own roads.”

I left the Wali’s party about midnight. It was a cool moonlight night—cool at Saidu, that is, which is thirty-seven hundred feet high. But as we dropped to lower altitudes the air became soft and warm to the face. All the villages were asleep, not a light showing. The headlights picked up strange sights. In each village people had moved their beds into the open. Dozens of them—hundreds of them in the larger villages—lined the streets. Men and boys lay in the open, their shoes off, their clothes on, with no pillows except their arms, no sheet or blanket to cover them. Once Abdul stopped the car in a narrow street lined with mud houses in order to remove an obstacle from the road; and I could plainly hear above the idling of the motor the chorus of dozens of men snoring.

By day the highway had been empty. But when we cleared Malakand and dropped down the corkscrew road carved out of rock that leads to the plains, it became clogged. Now the roads were filled with traffic. Bullocks with tiny tinkling bells at their throats were pulling ancient carts whose wooden wheels were at least five feet in diameter. Some of these carts were loaded with produce. Others, open at the rear with sides at least eight feet high, were filled with people.

The headlights of my car picked these vehicles up every few hundred yards. There were hundreds of them going to or from Peshawar. These travelers were doing by night some of the work of

Pakistan. Some were carrying produce to market; some were on journeys to their village; others were moving to new homes or traveling in search of employment.

This night travel on the highways went at a slow pace, a snail's pace. The bullocks barely moved, not making even a mile an hour. It was the easy, relaxed pace of the cow. It was slow and yet incessant, like all of the movements of Asia. This highway movement had indeed the patience which gives Asia the endurance to outlive any invader, to swallow the foreigner and make him her own, to absorb any force that intrudes. These men and animals were plodding in the dead of night to some miserable destiny, just as their forebears centuries ago plodded in the darkness to their mud huts and *poori*. They represented the durable quality of life—the will, the power, the instinctive urge that have carried the human race through all the pillaging that has swept the plains of Asia.

We stopped to fix a tire. The night was deathly still. Then came the tinkle of the tiny bullock bells, as sweet and soft as any silver bell the world around. And above the soft tinkling of the bells were the harsh creaking and groaning of the wooden wheels of the bullock carts. No human voice to break the silence—no shouts, no calls, no commands to the animals. Dozens of carts emerged slowly from the darkness and to the music of bells melted away in the night.

Swat and its place in this scheme of things occupied my mind. I walked up and down the highway, thinking of the Wali, an absolute monarch on the edge of Communist Russia, who was trying hard to adapt an ancient institution to modern needs. I wondered how long this Wali would survive, how long he could hold back the tide of democratic forces, how deep the tensions inside Swat really were.

As I thought of these things I walked several hundred yards ahead and now was only in the farthest reaches of the headlights. Suddenly I was so startled I actually jumped a few feet. A lizard—over two feet long and as big as a dog—ran across the road at my very feet and disappeared in a ditch on the side of the highway.

This ugly, lumbering lizard seemed as unreal, as much out of place, as the Wali who rules as King on a continent where a people's revolution has swept most royalty into the limbo.

Chapter 4
Tumbling Down The Kaghah

The Kaghah is one of the best trout streams I have ever known. It is a clear-water river of great volume which drops in a roaring torrent through a narrow winding canyon. Throughout its length it shows white water that thunders down from the snowbanks of the high Himalayas and is too fast and too deep to wade even in July. It is in the main an angry torrent that pours over huge granite boulders, filling the air with a cold, light spray. But there are magnificent pools at irregular intervals where the brown trout lie. Some of these pools are tiny flat spots behind huge boulders just above a falls. Others are a hundred yards or so long at the base of a rapids. Whatever the size, they are not placid pools such as we have in New England. They are churned with the power of water dropping several hundred feet a mile. The heads of these pools boil; their central stretches are often filled with whirling eddies; the flat water moves so fast its surface is always churned. The water is deep and cold, and the pools have so much movement in them that they seem mysterious. The ruffled surface makes them largely opaque, concealing the great trout that were planted here by the British about 1908 and that now reach two and three pounds.

Colonel and Mrs. H. M. el Effendi of the Pakistani Northern Scouts are ardent trout fishermen and were stationed in Gilgit when I visited it in July 1951. I borrowed from them a fly rod, a reel, and a line, since my own fishing equipment had gone to Delhi for my Himalayan crossing. My favorite flies were with it, and there were no flies in Gilgit. I borrowed from the Effendis two wet flies—a No. 10 black Woolly Worm (which the Effendis perhaps more properly called a Zulu) and a No. 14 Queen of the Waters.

I went up the Kaghah one July afternoon for fishing. This river comes down a narrow, twisting canyon not more than a quarter mile wide. The canyon walls rise three or four thousand feet in the lower reaches and ten thousand feet or more higher up. The Kaghah runs off a high basin of the Himalayas, falling from fifteen thousand feet to five thousand (the elevation of Gilgit) in about fifteen miles. The canyon walls are granite, largely devoid of trees, but with some juniper, pine, and fir in the high reaches. The canyon walls rise precipitously. They are precarious footing for any animal except the

ibex and the markhor. The markhor—the goats with the flat twisted horns who drive away snakes, whose skin kept in a house gives immunity from reptiles—thrive here, walking the edges of the cliffs with unconcern as they search out the sweet grass of the high ledges.

I stopped a few miles up the canyon at a place where a granite boulder, larger than the biggest piano, protruded like an elbow from the shore. It broke the force of the stream so as to form below it a deep pool perhaps fifty feet long and twenty feet wide. I put on the Woolly Worm, stood under the shadow of the huge boulder at the head of the pool, and cast into its lower end. Then I started to retrieve, pulling in the line with my left hand in short, easy jerks in order to make the fly simulate a swimming nymph. The Woolly Worm had traveled hardly three feet before I turned over one of the largest trout I had ever seen. I saw the whole of his light yellow belly as he whirled under the fly. The local villager from Gilgit who had come along as my bearer and who had insisted there were no trout in this stretch of the river let out a lusty shout from the bank. I cast again and on the retrieve once more turned over a big trout. That happened four times; and on each occasion my Gilgit friend shouted with excitement. On the fifth cast I hooked a smaller trout but lost it the same instant. On the sixth cast I hooked and lost another small trout. It was plain that the Woolly Worm excited the trout; but it was also clear that this fly, so dependable in Montana and Oregon, had less appeal on the Kaghah. So I changed to the No. 14 Queen of the Waters and went down to another pool that was formed on the inside of a big turn in the river.

I cast into the lower end and started the retrieve when a twelve-inch brown trout took hold. I beached him on a tiny spit of sand. I cast again in the same place and on the second cast brought the twin of the first trout to shore. Each cast of the Queen of the Waters brought me a trout. I took twelve out of this pool. Then I returned upstream to the first pool I had fished and caught twelve more there. I moved downstream into a pool fifty yards long and almost as wide, where the river ran over a flat sandy stretch. Here I caught and landed eight more. I caught them so fast my Gilgit bearer was breathless, running up and down the steep bank that led to the river's edge. His eyes were wide with excitement. This was the sterile stretch of the river where the natives fished for hours with worms to get one trout. Now it was alive with fish. The bottom of the river exploded on each cast. Trout from a quarter pound to three pounds rolled under the little Queen of the Waters, sucking it into their mouths. With each trout the fly became more and more frayed. I retied the leader several times, as it too was getting worn. This was my one and only fly (apart from the Woolly Worm), and I could not afford to lose it.

Finally it was apparent that the little fly was about exhausted. Some of its feathers were gone; the winding on the shank was getting loose. I had only a few casts left. So I called my bearer to me and explained to him the method of wet-fly fishing which I had used so successfully on the Kaghah. I described as best I could the hydraulics of the big pool. I pointed to the end of the pool where the big trout lay. I explained that it would be a mistake to cast over them or directly onto them. The way to fish the pool was to cast directly opposite on the far side of the swift water. The current would carry the wet fly to the big trout at the lower end. Then the retrieve must quickly start.

If I had not already become a god to this bearer, the next cast made me such. I explained when and where the trout would strike. My prediction was perfect, and shortly I snaked out onto the rocky shore a thrashing, sixteen-inch brown.

Thirty-two brown trout, running from a quarter pound to three pounds, in a short afternoon of fishing! The word spread quickly through Gilgit. Men and boys came running to see these trout that were caught where trout were not supposed to be. I passed the frayed little Queen of the Waters around that they all might see the lure. The face of my bearer showed the adoration he now had for me. He made me overnight a legendary figure in the fishing circles of Gilgit. My stature grew and grew with the telling of my fishing luck. And my reputation did not seem to suffer in the slightest degree because the biggest of the trout—the piscatorial Wali of the Kaghah—had as usual gotten away.

This fishing adventure on the roaring, clear-water Kaghah was indeed an exciting one. But it was not quite as exciting as my introduction to the canyon had been.

On a blistering hot July morning I left Peshawar for Gilgit on a C-47 of the Orient Airways. The pilot—a young Pakistani who had been trained by the British—sent word to me shortly after the take-off that he would like to have me take the co-pilot's seat. It was from that vantage point that I first saw the broad sweep of the Himalayas.

Flying the Himalayas is a difficult and hazardous enterprise. There are no weather reports for the pilots. The weather report mostly needed is a report on the few passes through which the plane must pass. These are passes deep in the range, remote from any trail or road, far removed from any lookout. The mountains from a distance may appear to be clear of fog and mist. Weather, however, makes up strong and fast in the Himalayas. The condensation over glaciers and snow fields often comes quickly and in a matter of minutes erases a peak. Every flight is an experimental journey. There are almost always some clouds over the mountains. The pilot gains the necessary altitude and then looks for the hole in the clouds that will carry him through.

Often he has to turn back. There are times when it is easy to return. There are points beyond which there is no return. Maneuverability of small planes at high altitudes is not great because their ceiling is low. One who flies the Himalayas has perhaps a thousand-foot clearance beneath him; and sometimes he has less than a quarter of a mile on either side for turning. When he is in those spots he must go forward. That is why there is tenseness in the cockpit as the pilot feels his way along the cloud banks that border the high peaks and tries to make up his mind whether to go ahead or turn back.

These are the things the pilot and I discussed on the flight north from Peshawar. The green fields of the plains stretched for miles below us, looking like tidy gardens set apart by hedges. The villages of mud huts, when seen from the air, lost their ugliness and seemed to be shady retreats from fields unmarked with trees. The highways were mostly green-covered avenues. Punjab from the air seemed as neat as England.

To our left were the ridges guarding the valley of Swat. Straight ahead were cumulus clouds concealing the Himalayas we hoped to cross. While we flew the one hundred miles or more of plains leading north, we climbed to 12,000 feet. By the time we reached the canyons leading into the Himalayas the cloud bank, which seemed solid and forbidding from the distance, had corridors a mile or more wide winding through it.

"It's breaking up," the pilot said. "We can take the short cut."

The short cut turned out to be an unexpected pass in a wild jumble of ridges and peaks.

We left the cloud bank behind and were in clear sunshine with only a scattering of fleecy clouds. We climbed to 15,000 feet before we straightened out. A great jumble of peaks was on all sides—not a trail, not a village, not a sign of civilization as far as the eye could see. The map I held on my lap showed 15,000-, 16,000-, 18,000-foot peaks by the hundreds. There were dozens higher than any peak in the States. I remembered Rainier, Adams, Hood, Shasta, and Whitney along the Pacific. In their settings they are majestic, inspiring mountains, standing over ridges 6,000 or 7,000 feet high. But the giants of our mountains would be shrunk to nondescript peaks in the Himalayas. Here the ridges run to 13,000 feet or even higher, making even 20,000-foot peaks seem no higher than Mount Washington in New Hampshire. The Himalayan tree line usually stops at 12,000 feet; perpetual snow and ice start around 13,000 feet. The Himalayas get by altitude what our mountains get by latitude. Hood of our Cascades, which tops 11,000 feet; Adams, which is over 12,000 feet; Rainier, which is over 14,000 feet, are draped in snow and ice the year around. In the Himalayas they would be only ordinary peaks mostly

below snow line, overshadowed by giants and undistinguished from any of hundreds of mountains.

The giants of the Himalayas and Karakorams are massive and startling. On our right this day was the great wall of Nanga Parbat (26,660 feet), which marks the western end of the main Himalayas. Its top is disk-shaped, its sides straight up and down. It looks like solid snow and ice. This morning its steep and treacherous sides were glistening and sparkling in the sun—cold, forbidding, almost frightening. No one has ever found a way up it. It has claimed many who tried—the great Mummery and all but one of the 1936 German expedition.

Nanga Parbat (which means Naked Hill) is rich in legends. It has snow snakes—fifty to one hundred feet long—that come out of the snow and chase anyone who dares climb it. At its top is a tree of diamonds. Once a man reached the tree and stole the diamonds. The snow snakes chased him. As he ran, he kept tossing the diamonds over his shoulder to appease the snakes. They stopped to pick up each one; but they soon made up for the lost time and gradually drew close to the man. He managed, however, to reach his hut and, rushing inside, slammed the door and lay on the floor exhausted, still clutching one diamond in his hand. Great blows hit the cabin, making it tremble and shake. Finally he threw the last diamond out the window. Then the assault stopped at once and all was quiet. He cautiously opened the door and peered out. Nothing was there. The snow snakes had mysteriously disappeared.

Far to the north was the white crest of Lamba Pahar or K2 (28,250 feet) of the Karakorams, the mountain that turned back American expeditions in 1938 and 1939 and that claimed the lives of four men in the second of those expeditions. Around it were some of the other thirty-three peaks of the Karakorams (which means Black Rock) that rise higher than 24,000 feet. At this distance and from this altitude they looked like mystery mountains from another earth.

Closer at hand was Rakhapooshe (25,560 feet), whose sharp nose punctured the sky. Rakhapooshe, unlike Nanga Parbat, has no legends, owing perhaps to the fact that it has been farther removed from the Hindu influence. Rakha was the name of the legendary holy man who was supposed to have climbed the peak, and pooshe indicates it was his home.

Nanga Parbat, K2, Rakhapooshe, and a host of other icy peaks were giants who dominated the scene and made all the others shrink to insignificance.

The white ribbon of the Indus could now and then be seen to the east winding its way through the massive range. There was no sign of any trail leading north and south or east and west. There is a jeep

road into Gilgit starting at Abbottabad and going through Balakot, Kagan, over Babusar Pass (13,690 feet), and down to Chilas and Gilgit. This trail, described by Tilman, *Two Mountains and a River*, is open only four months in the year. It is the only path from the south over this stretch of the Himalayas. But this day I could not find it in the tangled mass of ridges and ravines below me.

The main direction of the Himalayas is east and west. But when one is in them or over them, it is apparent that the ridges run to all points of the compass, making up into the deepest, most complex wrinkle the world's surface has known. There are a few lakes here and there—not many. The main river in the western end is the Indus. A few smaller streams wind through the canyons. But by July the canyons seem dry. The glaciers and snow fields, high on the shoulders, give the ridges their great distinction.

The pass we were headed for was between thirteen and fourteen thousand feet high. When I first saw it, I did not believe it could be our passage. But as I looked for alternatives I saw that there was none. This was the lowest point on the ridges that stood between us and Gilgit. It had features that were startling as well as unique. This pass was, in fact, a high, narrow canyon a quarter of a mile long and two hundred yards wide. Sheer granite cliffs went up a few thousand feet on each side of the pass. From a distance it looked like a deep narrow notch in a granite wall.

It was now apparent why blind flying would be impossible here. Passage through this high, tight little canyon was like threading a needle. There was no margin for error. One had to hit this narrow channel squarely or not at all.

There was snow in the saddle and ice on the granite walls. It seemed as if the wings scraped granite as we flew through the pass. It was close work. There was tension in the cockpit. After we soared through, the pilot grinned and said, "Now we will have fun."

We at once lost altitude and started down the north side. In a few miles we picked up a narrow, twisting canyon where a tiny white stream ran.

"The Kaghah," the pilot said. "In fifteen miles we will be at the end of the canyon where the Kaghah flows into the Gilgit River. We'll be in Gilgit in a 'jiffy'."

In fifteen miles we dropped ten thousand feet; and as we dropped we twisted and turned down the Kaghah canyon. I remembered leaves I had seen along the Appalachian Trail in Virginia—leaves picked up in the fall by little whirlwinds and then dropped like clouds along a ridge. I remembered the starlings coming into Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C., at dusk on winter days to settle in the trees near the Treasury Building. The starlings, like the leaves, tumbled from the sky

—falling slowly and gracefully, turning this way and that, and disappearing softly in the trees.

That is the way we tumbled down the Kaghah. The canyon is a narrow, winding one, never more than a quarter of a mile wide. First we were on one wing, then on the other. Back and forth we tipped as we fell gently from the sky, as gently as a cloud that rolls softly toward the earth in an easy, graceful rhythm. This seemed to be the downward motion of a leaf—tilting one way, then another—floating leisurely in quiet air—whirling downward on a sudden and mysterious current—twisting and turning in a gentle breeze—dropping with effortless ease, relaxed and nonchalant. This was the excitement of relaxation. We were falling from the sky in easy convolutions. This was the feeling of graceful slow motion. We were rolling gently in a bed of clouds. We tumbled ten thousand feet in soft, clear air.

The canyon walls now were high on each side; we were not far above the water. The end of the canyon was in sight. I heard the wheels go down. The pilot, evidently noticing my concern, said, “I have to put the wheels down now because when we reach the end of the canyon we turn right and land.”

“No matter what?” I asked.

“No matter what,” he said. “There’s nowhere else to go—no room to maneuver above Gilgit.”

Then we made the right turn. There ahead of us was Gilgit and a small gravel runway. We landed gently in the dust. And when the door opened there were the Gilgit Scouts with one big drum, three snare drums, and five bagpipes making music that reminded me of our St. Andrew’s Society dinners in Washington, D.C. And as I reviewed the Scouts (who did the British close-order drill with much stomping and arm swinging) it seemed as if I were still tumbling through the air—this time to music that filled me with a great homesickness.

One who flies the Himalayas has perhaps a thousand-foot clearance beneath him; and sometimes he has less than a quarter of a mile on either side for turning.

The peasants of the Gilgit region look down on musicians; but they boast of their own.

Throughout its length the Kaghah shows white water that thunders down from the snowbanks of the high Himalayas, which is too fast and too deep to wade even in July.

The central valley of Swat where the Swat River runs is as fertile and pleasant as our Connecticut River valley.

There is no place in the Gilgit region not dominated by high, towering snow-clad peaks. Every village, every meadow by a river, is deep in a canyon, a tiny oasis in a high,broken, wind-swept glacial country.

Chapter 5
The Music Of Pounding Feet

Gilgit is the political center of an ancient tribal area that lies snug against the Sinkiang border. For centuries its tribes controlled principalities or kingdoms like Swat, which lies over the mountains to the west. The major ones in the Gilgit group were Punial, Yasin, Gupis, Ishkoman, Chilas, Gilgit, Astor, Hunza, and Nagir. Of these, Hunza, Nagir, Punial, Yasin, Gupis, and Ishkoman were native states under the British. Hunza, Nagir, and Punial have hereditary rulers; the others have rajahs who are appointed by Pakistan (formerly by the British). Astor, Gilgit, and Chilas are today relics of ancient states; each has a hereditary rajah, but he has no power and only a little hereditary revenue.

Of the existing native states, Hunza and Nagir are the most important. Today they pay nominal homage to West Pakistan, although politically they have their independence. In the fashion of ancient Asian princes, they pay this homage in gold—Hunza, thirteen ounces a year; Nagir, seventeen.

In ancient days the pastime of the tribes was raiding each other. Hunza and Nagir were a veritable terror in the Karakorams. They raided from Herat (Afghanistan) to Yarkand (Sinkiang). They lay in wait along the trade routes that ran north of the Karakorams and the one that crossed from Leh to Yarkand. They captured hundreds of horses and camels. They captured people, too, and sold them, as they did the camels, to Turkestan for slave labor. But from time immemorial Gilgit was *the* favorite raiding ground for the tribes from the west and the north. Here they would come to loot and kill and carry off women and children. It got so that the people of Gilgit discovered omens that foretold the raids:

—Yasin would raid if a very heavy rain fell at Gilgit.
—Nagir would raid if vultures hovered over Gilgit.
—Hunza would raid if the wolves killed many sheep at night.
—Punial would raid if the harvest was good.

That custom continues to this day, though it is now on a minor scale. One night when I was camped in Gilgit some young Nagirs raided Hunza. They crept across a narrow suspension bridge and stole a sheep. The young men of Hunza came in fast pursuit with muzzle-

loading muskets. These mountains are filled with garnets, so thick in spots that one can scoop them up by the handful. Rough garnets were the ammunition the Hunzukuts used this night. They peppered the legs and backs of the Nagirs with buckshot of the precious garnet, chased them across the bridge, and retrieved their sheep.

The Gilgit area, about the size of Ohio, was for centuries occupied by a loose collection of warring tribes. Some of these tribes or states paid tribute to adjoining powers. Thus prior to 1807 Gilgit paid tribute to the Moslem rajahs of Kashmir. But no outside nation had more than nominal power here. In 1842 it was conquered by the Sikhs. In 1889 the British established a political agency at Gilgit and began to extend British power over the various principalities. Hunza and Nagir were the core of resistance to British power. They flirted with Russia, threatening to make an alliance that would remove this wedge of power that Britain had extended into the mountain recesses of the great Northwest. The Mir of Hunza sent word to Britain, "I will defy you even though I have to use bullets of gold." In the final drive against Hunza and Nagir in 1891—the campaign that at long last caused these tribes to submit—Britain used as her stronghold a fort at Chalt on the Hunza River. One day the Mir of Hunza sent a note to the commanding British officer asking for a surrender of the Chalt. "That place," he wrote, "is more precious to us than are the strings of our wives' pajamas."

The fight and independence are gone from these tribes. Today they are most docile and co-operative. They have not yet been amalgamated to form a separate state of West Pakistan. But they are tied closely to it through the Political Agency that now administers the area for Karachi. The chief tie is the Moslem religion, which the proximity of the Communists operating next door in Sinkiang has made intimate.

The people of this area, though a mixture of Aryan and Mongol, are decidedly on the Aryan side of the line. They are mostly dark-complexioned, well built, and of medium height. The Mongol strain in them is subdued. Once there were high-caste orthodox Hindus in the land and probably low-caste Hindus too. There are today remnants of Hinduism in this area that relate to the sacred cow legend:

—If any part of a cow or if cow dung falls into a well, a tempest at once arises.
—The people drink little cow milk and eat little beef because they believe it may make them lame or blind.
—Women put a calf to a cow for suckling; men never do.

There is another curious relic of the early Hindu influence. The Hindus placed musicians in a rather low caste. The musicians who had

played for me at Manali were Untouchables. The musicians who played for me at Gilgit were mostly in the Northern Scouts or the Gilgit Scouts. They played under military orders. In their own villages they would not have touched a flute or a drum or the bowl-like guitar. Musicians, even in Ismaili Hunza, are looked down upon.

Today there are a few Buddhists but no Hindus in the Gilgit area. The vast majority are Moslems. The Moslem faith, brought to Gilgit and Hunza on the trade routes, had taken hold of most of the people by A.D. 1600. Today some are orthodox Sunnis; the Nagirs, like the Persians, are Shiites; the Hunzukuts are Ismailis, of which Aga Khan, ex-father-in-law of Rita Hayworth, is the head. This religion is the cement which brought these people closer together as a result of the threat of Russian imperialism from the north.

The Gilgit area is one of the most awe-inspiring inhabited spots in the world. The town of Gilgit is just under five thousand feet, lying in a canyon a mile or so wide. The connecting valleys are parts of a small river system cut into massive ranges. These valleys are from five to eight thousand feet high—narrow and confined, tucked deep between high canyon walls. Hunza, whose capital is Baltit and whose border touches Sinkiang, is in truth a narrow, winding canyon a hundred miles long and a half mile wide. There are places where the canyon walls go almost straight up for ten, fifteen, twenty thousand feet. One can stand at the foot of glaciers or snow fields that run for two miles above him. There is no place in this region not dominated by high, towering, snow-clad peaks. Every village, every meadow by a river is deep in a canyon, a tiny oasis in a high, broken, wind-swept glacial country.

The lower reaches of the mountains are barren. At seven thousand feet there are a few juniper. (This is the wood which the natives commonly consider sacred. Its fungus is burned and the smoke inhaled for sickness. It is burned at weddings to purify the house.) At eight thousand feet the juniper is thirty feet high and three to four feet in diameter. At nine thousand feet there are pine and spruce. Between eight and ten thousand feet there are birch and aspen, whose bark is used to make baskets and wrappers for butter and cheese when buried in the ground. In this belt are yellow monkey flowers, saxifrage, white and blue daisies, pink and blue wild roses whose bushes stand ten feet high, forget-me-nots, pinks, cinquefoil, light blue geraniums with heads twice as big as a silver dollar, multicolored orchids, and wild gooseberries and raspberries. In this belt there are also grasses for grazing. But the belt is not a wide one. At best it is around two thousand feet wide. Above ten thousand feet the trees thin out, and they are gone at twelve thousand feet. The grass runs to the snow line at thirteen thousand feet; and it is to that point that the goatherds

take the sheep and goats in summer.

But this belt of greenery does not extend through all of the Gilgit area. Hunza, which is in the north, has no trees. Hunza is indeed a real desert set in high mountains. (The Mir of Hunza is believed to have the power to produce rain. He sometimes puts the responsibility on a mullah by having the priest sit for a couple of hours in water up to his neck.) The average annual rainfall in Hunza between eight and ten thousand feet is about two inches. In the Gilgit Valley it is about twenty inches. The snow fields and glaciers supply most of the water the people have. The Hunza River runs chocolate in the summer, the Gilgit chalk. These streams, thick with sediment, irrigate the lands. Hunza has canals brought sixty miles along sheer cliffs to terraces and bottom lands. Every valley is dependent upon the river for its livelihood.

The soil is friable and rocky. There are few bottom lands to cultivate. Farms are found in startling places. Some canyon walls will have low stone buildings where sheep, goats, and cattle are kept at night. The farming is done mostly on steep mountain slopes where retaining walls have been built to hold the terraces. Some of these terraces have been constructed out of rock and filled with soil carried in baskets from a river bed a few thousand feet below. Each morning men and women climb mile or more to skimpy fields that are strung along the faces of cliffs. They must carry manure on their backs; and at harvest time they bring the crops down in the same manner. Every bench, every terrace to which water can be brought, every inch of available land is cultivated. The hand tool most commonly used is a pick made out of the horn of an ibex.

The main products of these rocky farming projects are wheat, corn, peas, beans, barley, apricots, grapes, walnuts, apples. The grapes of Hunza are used to make a light wine which the Ismaili Moslems are not forbidden to drink. Of these farm products the most important are apricots and barley. Apricot trees grow to ten thousand feet. (This wood is considered best for burning.) As in Kulu and Lahul, an oil used for hair dressing is obtained from the pits. The fruit is dried for winter use. It is the apricot that gives the natives their sugar and their vitamin C. It is the apricot on which they are heavily dependent. Apricots and barley—these are the mainstays of their diet. From the barley they make unleavened bread (*chapattis*), rolling it thin and baking it in round sheets. In the summer this diet is supplemented by vegetables. There is not much poultry. Meat is eaten, though it is available only once in a while. There are milk and cheese from the goats and sheep. But yak butter is considered the richest. (At Naltar, a tiny village just under ten thousand feet, I met a divorced wife who complained bitterly that the new wife was not giving her children

butter and milk—food products considered essential in this high country.)

Existence in this remote and fearsome country is precarious. There is never enough food to last the winter through, no matter how strict the rationing. There will be weeks in the late winter when barley is the only food. The villagers then munch *chapattis*, waiting for spring. It is common, especially in Hunza, for the barley to give out before the new barley ripens. Then the natives live on dandelion leaves, turnip tops, and such other greens as they can find when the sun begins to warm the rocks of the canyon walls.

This area is not cursed with landlordism. Nearly everyone owns some land, and there are not many large holdings. The Mir of Hunza and the Mir of Nagir have some holdings that are large for the area. Tenants pay about one third of the crop as rent unless the landlord furnishes the seed, in which event the landlord gets 50 per cent or more of the crop. Taxes are paid in kind, the tax at the present time being a percentage of the crop based on a forty-year average of production.

The Mirs are not wealthy men by Asian standards. The Mir of Hunza, Mohammed Jamal Khan, serves as deputy for the Aga Khan in collecting the *zakat* (one fortieth of one's income) from the faithful in this bailiwick, which includes Russian Turkestan and Sinkiang. Each of these countries has about fifty thousand Ismailis. But they are Communist countries, closed to the Mir's collectors. In olden days the Mir of Hunza claimed land in Sinkiang. The Chinese recognized his claim as landowner, but not as ruler. So the Mir grazed his sheep there and charged others for doing it.

He sent a token of gold each year to the Chinese in Kashgar as token of his subordination to them. Yet he received from one section of Sinkiang an annual tribute of wool and felt in return for his policing the region and his extermination of bandits. Any rights which Hunza had in Sinkiang, however, were wiped out by a pro-Soviet government about twenty years ago. The Mir of Hunza also had property in Kashmir, but it has been lost in the Kashmir dispute.

The maladjustment in the Gilgit area that works for disequilibrium is not the ownership of land by a few but the inability of the land to produce enough food to support the people. Hunza has a population today of about twenty-three thousand people. Twelve hundred of them (mostly young men) spend all or a substantial part of the year working in Punjab. There was a time when the people of Hunza sold fruit and vegetables and rented horses to caravans traveling from Gilgit and Baltit to Yarkand. With that cash income they could buy salt and tea. But the Sinkiang border is now closed. No more caravans come down from the north bringing salt, rugs, wool, and skins. Russia

has blocked that trade route, sending all the traffic east and west. Cash income of the villagers of the Gilgit area has dropped substantially. Some pan for gold in the Hunza River, giving a share to the Mir because he is the Law and the State. But the opportunity for cash income is slight. The average family probably has no more than twenty-five rupees (five dollars) a year. This means that few can afford even tea, and that most of them must wash their own salt from the ground.

That is why more and more of the young people these days are walking the high passes that lead to the Punjab. They work awhile and then return with the cash that will buy a few refinements such as tea and salt. But they return with more than cash. They are beginning to bring back gonorrhea and syphilis too. The Gilgit area has been strangely free of venereal diseases from the earliest records. But they too are now being imported from the Punjab.

Most of the ancient tribes of the Gilgit area have been absorbed by the Gilgit government. Hunza and Nagir, however, are full-fledged states. The Mirs are absolute monarchs who rule with firm hands, the Political Agent in Gilgit not interfering except when it comes to the relations of Hunza and Nagir to foreign powers. The Mirs apply Islamic law; and all lawsuits start and end with them. Each uses banishment as a form of punishment. The Mir of Hunza sentences serious offenders to a place called Shingshal, the Mir of Nagir to one called Haspir. These are remote mountain retreats. The passes leading to them are around fifteen thousand feet. They are high basins that are severely cold in the winter but where by the dint of great effort an existence can be eked out of the thin, cold soil.

I did not visit those places of exile. But as I first traveled the barren canyons of the Gilgit area and saw the austere conditions under which people live, I wondered if any exile could bring a greater hardship.

There is no fertile spot in the whole area. Poplars have been planted in the valleys for shade and for timber; and when one looks down on a river bottom from a height it may look lush. But on close view it is a dull and ugly place. The soil is coarse and sandy. The irrigation water deposits a clayish silt wherever it runs. Men and women climb miles, not to lush fields but to skimpy little terraces that in a season will produce hardly a handful of wheat or barley. The larger part of Hunza and Nagir is snow and ice, only a few hundred square miles being inhabited and cultivable.

This is land where terrifying landslides come roaring off canyon walls, caused sometimes by earth tremors in the Karakorams. At other times it is an earth slip. Hundreds of thousands of tons of mud and rocks come in angry torrents down from the mountaintops to dam up rivers, wipe out houses, and clog the main routes of travel. These are

not the only avalanches. There are snow avalanches that can be almost as terrifying. A fresh layer of snow several feet deep often slides down a snow field a mile or so wide and a couple of miles long. As it rolls downward and picks up momentum, the snow dust from it fills the air. This snow forms into a great cloud and whirls into the valley, traveling sometimes eighty miles an hour. It's a cold, opaque cloud that has the chill of ice. It whines down the canyon, blowing men and women off their feet and dropping the temperature from 100 to 30 degrees in a few minutes. The snow avalanche sometimes creates a cloud so deep, so long, so thick that it blots out the sun, causing darkness that is almost complete. It is part of the harshness of these mountains as a place of abode.

The houses in this area are made of mud and rocks, with no chimneys and no windows. There is a hole in the roof over the hearth. People sit huddled over small fires during long winter months. Their religion teaches that they must bathe after any sexual act. And so they plunge into ice cold river water even in the dead of winter. When they come out and return to their cold mud houses to shiver and shake, they often get pneumonia.

These are the reasons why on first impression I felt that life in the Gilgit area would be banishment enough. I could not understand how banishment to Shingshal or Haspir could be worse. It was after I came to know the people of this tribal area that I learned differently. I learned that these people have a joy and zest of living that many of us have never known. It is living at the primitive level—the level that for most of us in the western world is becoming more and more remote from our daily lives.

The men have great endurance. They can walk uphill and down sixty miles a day, if necessary, and carry great loads from dawn to dark. I have been with them, climbing impossible places. And they went so quickly and outdistanced me so easily I felt ashamed. The women are equally as good, and their physical capacity would put to shame most of us.

The physical prowess is apparent in their social activities. Polo is an ancient game here. I saw it played in Gilgit. Each village has a polo field; and when the villagers play they follow their old rules. There is no limit to the number of players. Everyone plays, no matter what his rank. A peasant plays with the King. The opener of the game or the winner of the last game gallops at full speed down the field with the rest of the players in pursuit. When he reaches the center, he tosses the ball in the air and hits it with the stick, very frequently scoring a goal from the one stroke. It's a rough game. The polo stick is used not only to hit the ball but to attack the pony of the adversary. One can catch the ball with his hand and throw it. One can pull a man from a

horse. He can jump off the horse, pick up the ball and throw it, all the while hanging onto the horse's tail—and then leap over the horse's rump, land in the saddle, and be off on the chase again. This is a rough game that has no time limit. All the while flutes and drums keep playing. When a goal is scored—especially when a prominent person is playing—the men usually sing a song called "Bakshawar." They sang it for me at Gilgit, and the words go something like this:

Oh, my beloved, you are not only a precious pearl,
You are the pearl of pearls.
The steps I have taken to acquire your love
I have taken without thought of consequence.
I am fully aware of my failure in the enterprise.
I can see you in my mind's eye as a nymph in paradise
*To whom no human being can have access.**

** See Appendix 4, song 8*

The peasants of the Gilgit region like to dance. They look down on musicians as a class; but they boast of the quality of their own. One night at Gilgit I heard a flute player who made music exactly like the water that falls off a glacier above Naltar. I praised him to the Mir of Hunza. The Mir, a solid, chunky man in his early forties with a broad, pleasant face, thanked me but said he was sorry that the best flute player of Hunza was out on a hunting expedition.

"You haven't heard music until you hear him," the Mir of Hunza said.

The Mir of Nagir, a slight, thin man in his early thirties, who is quiet and retiring and not given to conversation, spoke up and said, "The flute players of Hunza are good, but we have even better ones in Nagir."

I heard flutes and drums and long-handled bowl-like guitars play plaintive music. There were wild, exotic songs; there were sad, melancholy ones. There was the song of Dhani.

Oh, my beloved, I shall roam about like a man,
mad in your love,
You are the light of my heart,
and I am the moth of that light.
Oh, my shining morning star, tell me,
why did you not come
to inquire of my health
when I was dying of your love?

A few of the men who sang and played were from the Northern Scouts and Gilgit Scouts, dressed in army uniforms. Most of them wore the native dress—long and loose pajama-like trousers, with long-sleeved shirts that were not tucked in. The trousers were white, the shirts white or brown. They wore white or brown wool caps with the edges rolled up all around. About half were barefooted, the other half wore sandals.

These men appeared in twos, threes, sixes, and eights. They did slow, graceful dances, holding out the ends of their shirts as if they were fancy ballroom dresses. They did a sword dance, reminiscent of the one I saw at Manali. This was a vigorous, slashing, war-like dance with much pantomime. They did fast, whirling dances, two men occupying the dance floor at a time and each couple apparently trying to outdo the others in speed and rhythm and emphasis. Then came a dance I can never forget. There were two men to start with, but others kept joining until there were about twenty dancers. Their dance was as wild and as bold as the snow avalanche. It too came in a torrent. The beats of the kettledrums had a savage sound. There was wildness in them—the raw, primitive wildness of high peaks and deep canyons. The dance built to a frenzy, men going faster and faster. They started to stomp their feet on every turn. They picked up speed and whirled so fast that the stomping became quick and pulsating. The tempo of the stomping was faster and faster. Now it was the sound of feet striking harder and faster than I thought man could manage. The whirling feet were running feet, pounding feet. The stomps were exultant. They came with abandon. This was a mad, wild orgy. This was primitive man back at the beginning, exorcising the spirits to make him strong and daring. I could no more keep my feet still than I could shut my ears to the music. I stood up. The feet of the dancers were pounding down a narrow canyon. And mine had to pound with them.

I had seen the moon turn the glaciers of Rakhapooshe to gold. I had skimmed the brow of Nanga Parbat and seen the brilliance of its ice cliffs and the ugly danger they offer. I had looked up three miles under cliffs and snow fields that reduce man to the pint of ashes which eventually measure him. I had come to know the exhausting grandeur of these giants and to realize what it meant to tremble in their presence. These were enduring experiences, never to leave me. But above and beyond them were the pounding feet at Gilgit—the wild and primitive dance that made a man want to jump and whirl and stomp and join the crowd in a mad exercise of war and combat.

Chapter 6
Russia, Sinkiang, And Feudalism

The Mir of Hunza asked Franc Shor, on an assignment for *Life* magazine in 1949, if Hunza could become a part of the United States. The Mir of Hunza (who speaks good English) asked me in 1951 if the United States was going to protect Hunza from Russia. He was dressed in white—white shoes, close-fitting white silk jacket, white trousers. A large gold watch chain was across his vest. His hat was a karakul skin. We were sitting on the lawn of the Political Agent at Gilgit; and when I turned to reply in a facetious way, I saw at once from his face that he was in dead earnest.

"Do you expect Russia to attack?" I asked.

"Someday. Then what does Hunza do?"

"Hold on until we get there," I said, half jokingly.

"Hold on with what?"

"With the brave men of Hunza," I replied.

Hunza, as I have said, lies snug against the Sinkiang border. This border is the watershed of the Hunza River system. It has never been surveyed. It is a wild and jagged piece of country—the second highest mountain complex in the world, with peaks rising to 28,250 feet. There are in fact more summits over twenty thousand feet in Hunza than there are summits over ten thousand feet in the Alps. The defiles are narrow and small, the passes few. The men of Hunza, properly equipped, could, if their hearts were in it, hold off any invading force for a long, long time.

These days the Mir of Hunza wonders if their hearts would be in such a project. I think they would be; but the Mir has problems and worries I do not know. The Mir's fortune has been contracting owing to the loss of grazing rights in Sinkiang, of property in Kashmir, of the tolls he exacted from the caravans that ran between Gilgit and Yarkand before the Communists closed the Sinkiang border, and of the *zakats* he used to collect up north for the Aga Khan. The pinch on his people is severe. Food does not last the winter through. Cash income has dropped. Twelve hundred out of twenty-three thousand of-his people make the long trek over the mountains to Punjab each year to find work.

A Hunzukut who left the kingdom for a journey and returned home used to bow before the Mir and present him with a percentage of his

earnings. This gift was important, *first* as a token of his fealty to the Mir, and *second* as a source of income to the royal family. In the summer of 1951 several young men of Hunza who returned home after several months' work in Punjab refused to give any *bakshish* to the Mir.

The Mir is upset by this show of independence. He is bothered by the influence which Punjab and the knowledge of the world and its affairs are having on his people. I got the impression that history is sweeping by the King; that he would like to recapture the ancient security and glory of his realm; that he does not quite comprehend how he can create (in the manner of the Wali of Swat) a modern regime on the foundations of the ancient one.

Being puzzled and upset, the Mir's glances to the north are unusually nervous ones. Not understanding what he sees, he is upset and anxious. And his reactions are normal for that state of mind—he thinks only in military terms; he worries how to defend his country with arms; he does not seem to understand that, if the hearts of his people were sound, no Russian troops could get through the narrow canyons which the men of Hunza guard.

I am convinced that the best defense along this southern rim of Russia is a political one. All of the gates leading south could be sealed politically with relative ease. If they were sealed politically they would be fairly secure. For the perimeter which Russia must guard is so long and extended that she could not possibly pierce it and hold the new territory by military means alone. Russia has great imperial designs. But her empire cannot be extended by the Red Army. For empire building, Russia needs political action beyond her frontiers, so that native forces recruited from the new subject country may take over the reins of government. Russia is today preparing Sinkiang in that way. And that preparation has its repercussions in the Karakorams and the Himalayas.

Sinkiang, which means "new frontier" and is pronounced "shinjiang," is a province twice the size of Texas with a population of about 4,000,000. It is the seat of ancient civilizations—older than any Europe has known. Many races are mixed there—the largest group being Uighurs whose language is Turki. About 85 per cent of Sinkiang's population is Moslem.

Sinkiang, though populated by people who are not Chinese, is historically a part of China. It is China's most western province, long used as a place of exile for political outcasts and other undesirable people. Sinkiang, the heart of Central Asia, is where Russia and China have long met in competition. China was the master of Sinkiang in the first century B.C. The power of China in Sinkiang receded and revived many times during the intervening centuries. The story of the clash of

Russian and Chinese interests in the province and its gradual drift away from China toward Russia is told in Maillart, *Forbidden Journey*. Central Asia has been called an "old nest of wild fanaticism and rude avarice and tyranny." Russia has used all methods to tie all of it to her empire. But from the days of the czars on down to date she has used the artifices of the politicians more than the power of her arms.

She put Russian Turkestan together out of a group of warring tribes between 1864 and 1868. In 1872 she got a most favorable trade treaty with China, allowing Russian caravans to cross Sinkiang at will. In Central Asia "bales of goods have been the best pioneers of inevitable armies and legal conquests." Russia's long-term interest, dating back at least a century, has been to block the trade routes from north-south and develop them east-west. During the Middle Ages rich trade routes ran west from the interior of China. Political as well as commercial advantages would be enormous to Russia if that could be done again. And events of the last two decades gave Russia her greatest opportunity to succeed.

In 1932 Russia stepped into Sinkiang on the heels of a rebellion in Kashgar and took over the finances of the country. Once inside Sinkiang, Russia built many military posts to fasten her hold on the country. It was during this period that the Mir of Hunza lost his grazing rights there. When Germany pressed Russia at Leningrad and Japan occupied east China, Russia withdrew from Sinkiang. When that happened, Chiang Kai-shek immediately sent a Chinese army into Sinkiang. But with China's internal deterioration and Russia's emergence as victor from the war, the tables turned. Sinkiang's western border posts were attacked by the Russian Army. Some Chinese officials had to escape through Hunza. Since that date Russia, not China, has been in control of this old Chinese province.

Now that the Communists are in control in China, Russia is collaborating with them in the exploitation of Sinkiang. Russia has a Sino-Russian Development Corporation which was formed to operate in Sinkiang. It has a Chinese head, but it is Russian-dominated and Russian-financed. It is an ECA program, Russian-style.

Russia has three main purposes in her control and manipulation of Sinkiang affairs.

First. Russia wants an all-weather, year-around open road to China. At present she has only the Trans-Siberian Railroad, which knows the full rigors of winter. A road through Sinkiang would cross milder, warmer country. That road is being built today by Russian engineers and Russian capital. It will realize the dreams of empire which the Communists have taken over from the Romanoffs.

Second. Sinkiang is a surplus-food area. There are vast desert stretches in Sinkiang, wide mountain areas, and desolate domains. But

there are also many fertile oases in the five-thousand-foot zone that produce abundantly both fruits and cereals. Russia has appropriated this food surplus for the needs of her less fortunate colonies.

Third. Sinkiang has oil and non-ferrous metals and Russia is feverishly exploiting their production.

These three purposes have made Sinkiang hum with activity. Railroads are being built, one that will run from Russia to the Pacific; airports have been constructed (one that is only 630 air miles from Delhi); some industrial plants have been started. Russia also has built many schools in Sinkiang. They teach, of course, the Communist philosophy; but they also teach reading, writing, and arithmetic. There are trade schools too. Sinkiang is a polylingual area, and Russia, who until recent years catered to a tribe's or a race's pride in its own culture, has had teachers for each language group. The impact of this program on Sinkiang and its people has been considerable. It has added up to an impressive total.

There is one central fact which we are apt to overlook in our appraisal of the political problems of Asia. The standard of living is so low that any perceptible increase in it, no matter how small it may be in fact, makes a deep impression on the people. Russia knows that and has taken direct measures to that end. For example, the Russians dropped off at every village in Sinkiang a small steam-power plant. That brought some of the Industrial Revolution to each mud hut. The people began to have within reach machinery that would permit them to escape from total dependency on agricultural efforts. Now they could saw wood by machines and start to build small industries. That is the way in which Russia started at the grass roots to raise the standard of living in Sinkiang. And in July 1951, Russia was distributing warm clothes to all the villagers in Sinkiang in anticipation of a severe winter.

We talked of these things at Gilgit. We also talked of the terror which the Russian Communists used in Sinkiang to pull some groups into line—how they used mass murders on a tremendous scale to crush political opposition.

"Most of the people of Sinkiang are Moslems," the Mir of Hunza said. "And the Communists will never control the Moslems." But his voice lacked assurance, for he knew that the rising standard of living on the Sinkiang side of the border had made its impression there and the falling standard on the Hunza side was already causing uneasiness in Gilgit.

The Pakistan government is alert to these problems. It knows that this border will never be sealed politically against Communist invasion unless the standard of living of the people (including education and medical care) is raised substantially and rapidly. It has

a medical and educational program for the Gilgit area, and parts of it are well under way. Gilgit officials are also talking of vast hydroelectric developments and an all-weather road leading out of Gilgit over a low pass into Swat. With a year-around road, commercial communication with Punjab could be established and a market for Gilgit's products obtained. Those products today are mostly fruit; and in anticipation of the new highway, additional acreage for fruit trees is being plotted and plans for their irrigation prepared. There are those who say that fruit export will be an improvident venture because the natives need all the sugar and vitamin C they can get and that their health will suffer if the meager crops of fruit are exported.

Efforts are being made to develop the resources of Gilgit and to find industries that will fit there. I ran into geological survey teams of young Australians who were combing the ridges, following the veins, and studying the faults for traces of precious minerals. While that was going on, a start toward a degree of industrialization was under way. In the summer of 1951 Gilgit was filled with talk about raising the standard of living of the people by one or two per cent. And one who was doing something about it was an American—John Clark of St. Charles, Illinois. Clark, a geologist, has been in the Gilgit area for two long stays. Clark, a short, slight man with a studious demeanor and professorial glasses, is in his early forties. He is, in addition to a geologist, a jack-of-all-trades, a skillful mechanic, a layman who knows basic medicine, a born teacher. He had a popular medical clinic at Baltit. He spoke the language of the people and lived with them as they lived. He became a part of the community life. He hunted with the men by day and danced with them by night. He developed craft schools to teach the people to make manufactured articles they could sell. He specialized in the crafts they already knew—wood carving, leathercraft, weaving, and spinning. He taught them how to make water wheels that generate power; he developed village industries that will send valued articles to the markets in exchange for food. He worked at the grass roots of Gilgit, convinced that a hundred-dollar project at the village level is worth more than a million-dollar project that tries to bring a new civilization to a whole region overnight.

John Clark knows the Gilgit people; he knows that many of them even today have never seen a wheel. These people start with intelligence, eagerness, and a capacity for development. But they start so far behind the march of science that only small beginnings can be made. If the beginnings are geared to the skills of the people, the foundation will be sound.

That is one of my tenets. Another is that we should give modest and direct help at the village level rather than munificent grants at the governmental level. Our program of political reconstruction in ancient

feudal Asia should be tied to the *peasants*, not to the *politicians*. Teams of experts should go and live in the villages, become a part of that life, and show by precept and example how a standard of living can be raised overnight.

These were my views which had matured as a result of three summers in Asia; and when I talked with Clark about it and saw the fervor of his belief in it I was more convinced than ever that it was right. By this method thousands of dollars can do more to stem the political tides of Communism than the billions we spend. If we will only send our youngsters and the youngsters of Asia to these outposts with a mission to change the standard of living of the people rather than their religion, we can quickly recoup much of our lost prestige in Asia. We can do more than that. We can seal the Russian border as well—seal it tight against political infiltration. Once the American ideal is interpreted to the villages; once the American influence begins to reshape a community, to transform it, to raise even fractionally the standard of living—then democratic, not Communist, ideas of freedom will become the most powerful force in Asia.

I saw enough in the Gilgit area to know that the natives appreciate that kind of treatment, are responsive to it, and value it highly. I saw some of their new woodwork, smoking pipes, dyes, and weaving. I saw the pride they had in these new skills. They respected the outsider who gave them ideas, tools to work with, and the means whereby they could help themselves. This gift was more enduring than bequests of money. For this gift made them independent and strong; the gift of money would make them beggars who would end by hating the donor.

The appreciation of villagers of Asia for this approach to their problems was made evident when John Clark left Hunza in November 1951 after a visit of nearly two years. He had come to know most of the people, had treated hundreds of them when they were ill, and had been a teacher to scores of the younger ones. They lined up to say farewell. The line stretched six miles. And it was six miles that Clark walked, shaking hands and saying good-by, before he could get on his pony and start to Gilgit.

One night, after Clark and I had both returned to this country, we had dinner in Washington, D.C. We reviewed the progress of his work and the projects of the Pakistan government in the Gilgit area. His work was a vest-pocket Point Four program. It would succeed only if it were done at the village level by men and women who lived among the people, gaining their confidence and respect by humility and competence. It could not be done by flying squadrons of experts, by high-pressured promotional efforts that we Americans know so well. It could be done only with patience and understanding of the villager

and his problems. That would mean that the expert who went among them would have to become a member of the village community. He could not pay visits to the villages as an adviser; he would have to live in the mud huts, eat the village fare, join the village festivities, come to know the psychology and superstitions of the people, and be one of them in language, in spirit, and in physical existence.

Asia's educational systems have been deficient in one major aspect. They have educated the students *away from* the villages. They have made the library, the comforts of the city, the learned societies, the literary circles the main attraction. China fell to the Communist regime not because of the superiority of Communist arms, not because of an overwhelming tide of converts to the Marxist cause. China fell because China's educated people were a class apart and aloof from the peasant. Dr. James Yen and his mass-education movement were the exception. But he was only a small fraction of the total. China's educational program was for the one tenth of one per cent of the people. The educational program that will save Asia from Communism is one that will be at the village level. It must teach more than reading and writing; it must teach more than public-health measures, vaccination, and first aid. This education program must be designed to raise the standard of living of the villager. It must increase the yield per acre, show the proper use of soil and fertilizers, and teach the handcrafts and the possibilities of home industry.

American assistance can take two forms: (1) Americans can establish training schools where teachers can be taught—natives who will return to their villages as teachers and experts; (2) Americans can themselves become the experts, go into the villages of Asia, settle there, and spread the benefits of mass education at the grass-roots level.

The best results, I think, would be obtained by training the Asians for the job of revolutionizing their own countries. The Ford Foundation has schools in India and Pakistan that will turn out trained personnel. Dr. James Yen's International Committee of the Mass Education Movement has an ambitious, long-range program for Asia—one that will establish in the Philippines a training center for men and women from all of Southeast Asia. There is the International Development Placement Association of Wallingford, Pennsylvania, and Dr. John L. Peters' World Assistance group of Oklahoma City, arranging to send young Americans to live and work in the villages of Asia and show the people how, with the aid of knowledge and modern technology, they can revolutionize their way of life.

John Clark and I discussed these matters. We discussed how easy it would be to seal the whole area below Russia's border politically—to make it immune from serious Communist political infiltration.

Teachers who went into the villages of Asia would go *primarily* to help the villagers raise their standard of living. A one per cent or two per cent increase would stem the tide of Communism and provide the stopgap sorely needed.

How many young men and women would it take?

How much money would it cost?

Would these youngsters be available? The applications would be so numerous that selections would have to be made. There would be no lack of volunteers. Young people the world around are hungry for some cause to sponsor—a cause which provides an alternative to war and to Communism, a cause which makes democracy a positive, active force in a world beset by poverty, illiteracy, disease, ignorance—and fear.

The problem of getting these young people, the problem of financing them would be relatively easy ones. The major problem would arise when these emissaries started operating at the village level. They would become at once a revolutionary force along the Russian border. No teacher imbued with the democratic cause could long be in these villages without spreading the doctrine of equality, tolerance, freedom, without teaching the people the shabbiness and vulgarity of the Communist creed.

That would be all to the good. But the teacher would be a revolutionary force in other respects too. The defects of Point Four, as some Point Four officials themselves recognize, is that it operates largely at the technical level. Point Four applied in a given area may increase by ten per cent the yield per acre of wheat. But the benefits to the peasant will be infinitesimal in many regions because he is only a serf. His net return from the year's farming operation—after rent is paid to the landlord, after interest is paid to the landlord on loans made—will often be not more than five per cent or ten per cent of the crop. All the Point Four agricultural aid that one can imagine will amount to little or nothing if the increased production inures largely to the landlord. All of the health measures taken under Point Four—elimination of malaria, vaccination for smallpox and cholera, purification of the water supply, improved methods of midwifery—will by themselves add up only to misery if a few men continue to own the whole country. Unless there is to be a distribution of wealth and a broad popular base for the spreading of the returns of production, public-health measures will merely increase the number of people among whom the existing poverty must be rationed.

This is not a problem in the Gilgit area of Pakistan. But it is acute in most of the areas of Asia. Asia has indeed a feudal economy. It is feudalism—the ownership by a few of the wealth of a nation and the management of the country for the benefit of the few-that begat

Communism in Russia. It is feudalism that is making the spread of Communism in Asia so easy.

The teacher who operated at the village level with this mass-education program would soon be confronted with that problem. Would he try to still the complaints of the peasant? Would he become an ally of the landlord? Or would he become a champion of the peasant and promote the basic reforms?

I put these questions to John Clark. "What would you do in that situation?" I asked.

His reply was instant. "I'd promote the revolution, of course."

Measures short of that will be futile. America in its new role of world leadership will either promote the revolution or it will promote the perpetuation of feudalism. When we do nothing, we promote feudalism. When we support reactionary governments, we promote feudalism. When we use ECA "to stabilize the situation," we promote feudalism. That is what we have done to date. That is the road to disaster. That is why the free world continues to shrink. That is why the Red tide sweeps on and on.

This was the range of the discussion between Clark and me. As we were parting, I asked, "What was the most satisfying thing you accomplished in Hunza in your long stay there?"

He told me how Russia had flooded the country with cheap safety matches from Austria and Czechoslovakia—matches that would seldom light. As Clark would strike one and it would sputter and go out, he would toss it aside, saying, "Communist matches." Pretty soon the Hunzukuts were calling matches that would not light "Communist matches." A thing that was Communist became a thing that would not work.

We can multiply that example over and over again if we will identify America with the *peasants* rather than the *politicians* and work at the village level. Once we do that, we can multiply Communist defeats and effectively seal the lands below the southern border of Russia against Communist political infiltration. We can do it *if* we are willing to embrace the democratic faith, proselytize, and resume our historic role as revolutionaries. We will not have the courage and imagination to do it, if our domestic policy encourages only orthodox, conventional ideas, if it places the main emphasis on security, and if it works for the protection of the *status quo*.

Chapter 7
An American Revolution

It was blistering hot in Peshawar, the thermometer hovering around 110 degrees. The heat had a wilting effect; and when I stepped off the plane after the flight from Gilgit, the air was so hot it made me catch my breath. After I reached Dean's Hotel, I took off my shirt, turned on the large overhead fan, and sat directly under it. I found that if I sat perfectly still I was comfortable. But the slightest exertion brought discomfort; and the room was oppressive beyond the reach of the fan.

The flight into Gilgit had taken about an hour. The flight out took almost two hours. Going in, we took the short cut I have described. Coming out, we followed the Gilgit River to the Indus, skimmed the brow of Nanga Parbat, and then followed the deep and winding Indus canyon downstream. But before reaching the Peshawar plains we bore northwest, flew over Saidu, capital of Swat, and followed the Swat River to Malakand before we turned south to Peshawar. The valley of Swat, in contrast to the thin, scrawny, marginal land of Gilgit, seemed a hundredfold more lush than when I had seen it earlier. And the plains of Peshawar were a rich and rank garden compared with the steep rock terraces of Hunza.

Now that I was under the fan at Dean's Hotel writing up my field notes of the Gilgit area, the problems of Hunza, Nagir, and Gilgit preoccupied me. Reactionary politicians and feudalism had made many areas along the Russian border real danger points. The inhospitable environment of the Karakorams had made the Gilgit areas susceptible to Communist influence.

There were, however, democratic forces at work in Pakistan that offset this danger. This food-deficit area was under the management of liberal Pakistani officials. Moreover, the people had a solidarity owing to the Moslem religion. The universality of Islam has made it a social force that transcends race or color.

Yet paradoxically the history of Islam is strewn with jealousies and antagonisms among the various Moslem states. Afghans and Pakistanis are today often at odds, pretty much as Turks and Arabs have been for centuries. Up in the Gilgit area the Mir of Hunza in 1951 was fanning ancient jealousies in the tribal circles, raising suspicions in the mind of one rajah, stirring hopes in the thoughts of another local leader,

sowing seeds of rivalry among the principalities in petty and unimportant details. Poverty and divisive politics were making the Gilgit area a vulnerable spot. The political acumen of the new Pakistan government would be put to the test in this troubled region of the great Northwest.

This hot afternoon I was trying to put together my divergent thoughts about this area. I had been interrupted by a merchant from the bazaar who came on a bicycle with several great bundles of merchandise wrapped in cotton cloth. In spite of my protests he unwrapped them and held before me each item in the packs—soft Kashmir woolens, hand-embroidered dressing gowns, furs of the golden fox and the snow leopard, luncheon sets, and dozens of other cotton, wool, and linen products. It was dusk when he finally left. I sat on in the gathering darkness under the fan, waiting for the cool of night to come. But no relief from the heat arrived. Apart from the fan, not a breath of air stirred. It was a hot, suffocating night with no noticeable difference in temperature after sunset.

I dressed and went to the dining room for food. But this night my appetite had left me. In the afternoon the bearer had brought me many quarts of iced water, and I drank it in great quantities, as it was fairly palatable. I made the mistake, however, of drinking deeply of the last of the bottles. That water was tepid and tasted like water in which someone had washed his feet. Since the idea persisted beyond the time when the waiter served the lamb, potatoes, and string beans, I left the table in mid-meal.

There were two men on the porch of the hotel—one a Mongol and the other a young Pakistani who served as his interpreter. The Mongol was a man in his fifties who once was a prince. I heard but did not get his name. He was tall, thin, angular, with high cheekbones. His skin was light yellow, his eyes deep-set. He had made his way down from Tibet during the previous year, coming out ahead of the Communists and their "liberation" program. He got to Peshawar. What he was doing there, I did not inquire.

When I joined him and his companion, he started at once to talk of America. In a few moments we were on the topic which all Asian conversation reaches—who would win, Russia or America?

"What is your view?" I asked.

"America has the wealth and the military power. Russia has the ideas."

"Which in your view is more important?"

"Ideas usually win."

"But what ideas does Russia have?"

"Ideas of liberty."

"Ideas of liberty?" I snorted. "Liberty for the Politburo perhaps but

certainly not for the people."

"Yes, that's true," this Mongol prince replied. "But in the setting of feudal Asia, Russia has ideas for the liberation of the peasants."

"But America has vastly more important ideas, more challenging ideas," I answered.

I went on to describe the vicious imperial designs of Soviet Russia—what it meant for a nation to be a colony in the Russian Empire. I pointed out that since the end of World War II Soviet Russia had added over two million square miles of Asia to its empire. While Russia was making China and Sinkiang increasingly subservient to her wishes, America was promoting a program of liberation. Since World War II, America and other nations of the West had been influential in getting independence for over three million square miles of Asian territory—India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia, Israel, Korea. While Russia was forcing nations into her police state, America and other nations of the West were helping about six hundred million people obtain self-rule and independence. Since World War II one fourth of the people of the world have won their political independence. That has been the influence of the West, working through the United Nations.

I told the Mongol prince that this was not a new and casual program so far as America was concerned. I told him of the Declaration of Independence and its tenet—"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." I explained that this Declaration of Independence was an article of American faith and a revolutionary principle as well. I told him what Abraham Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, once said about the Declaration of Independence—that it "gave promise that in due time the weights would be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance."

"That's wonderful," the Mongol prince replied. "Very wonderful. But the peasants of Asia do not know these things. America in their eyes is identified with their feudal lords. America is not to them the advocate of social justice."

There was a long silence on the porch of Dean's Hotel. Finally the Mongol prince spoke. "Why does not America try to set up bases in the hearts of these people rather than on their lands?"

We, rather than the Russians, are the true revolutionaries. We have used revolution as an instrument to establish social and political equality, not to fasten a police state on a nation. We have used revolution as the means of giving man economic opportunity and intellectual and spiritual freedom, not enslavement in one creed or philosophy. Revolution has been used by us to liberate man from

oppressive political controls, not to put him under the surveillance of a secret police. Revolution was our means of granting man the independence to worship God as he chose, rather than as the excuse to persecute the clergy and to teach a godless, materialistic creed.

The Mongol prince did not know America well enough to know these things. But he knew Asia well enough to know that America did not represent these values in the villages of the East. He saw the tragedy in letting Russia play the role of liberator. He did not know how easy it would be for warmhearted, tolerant, understanding America to become the revolutionary force of the world. All we would need do would be to restate our articles of faith in Asian terms and send the word to the villages of the East that the Declaration of Independence was for them also. Once we became obsessed with winning by ideas of freedom rather than by dollars and guns, the Red tide would ebb.

Peshawar has no street lights at night. The bazaars, which normally would light the sidewalks, were closed. A warm blanket of clouds hung low over the plains. Peshawar was deep in darkness. I left the two men on the porch of the hotel and walked the streets. I wanted to get some relief from the tedious afternoon under the fan. I wanted to be alone to think of the disaster which the Mongol had painted for America.

Dark, indistinct forms came out of the darkness, brushed silently by, and were soon swallowed up. I could hear the echo of my feet on a short wooden bridge and the harsh guttural sound of men's voices from down below. An unlighted bicycle whipped by, scraping my arm. I picked up the scent of perfume; and a woman of the evening dressed in white strolled warmly near. In a few minutes I smelled strong, harsh body odors before I realized I was passing a group of silent men leaning against a fence. The smell of coffee came from an indistinct hulk of a house. Nearby a radio played Pukhto music. A bullock with a soft silver bell passed, followed by a ghostly figure. Somewhere a baby cried. All else was quiet. The people I met walked noiselessly as if they were wraiths.

There was a bench in a patch of grass near the sidewalk where I sat for an hour. There I listened to Peshawar, smelled Peshawar, and strained my eyes to see Peshawar. What I heard and smelled and saw was vague and indistinct—a distortion of a fragmentary part of an ancient civilization.

I realized that that was the way America is getting her impressions of Asia. We see Asia through a glass darkly. We see the sordid side, the cruel and dismal phases of the upheaval. We are so busy, so hurried, that we visualize Asia only as a bottomless pit. We are so remote that we despair of any solution. We have not caught the spirit

of the revolutions sweeping Asia; we do not understand their tempo nor the force behind them. We do not understand how easy it would be to guide and direct them, how dangerous it is to try to stop them. We see despondency and depression where we should see light and hope; we see misery where we should see opportunity; we see frustrating difficulties where we should see exciting challenges. We see Asia as dimly as I saw vague figures walking the darkness on this hot and oppressive night in Peshawar.

Appendix 1

My Itinerary-July And August, 1951

July 1	New York City
July 2	Frankfurt, Germany; Zurich, Switzerland
July 3–6	Belgrade, Yugoslavia
July 7	Munich, Germany
July 8	Beirut, Lebanon
July 9	Karachi, Pakistan
July 10–11	Kabul, Afghanistan
July 12	Bamian, Afghanistan
July 13	Kabul, Afghanistan
July 14	Peshawar, Pakistan
July 15	Swat
July 16–17	Gilgit, Pakistan
July 18	Nalgar, Pakistan
July 19–20	Gilgit, Pakistan
July 21	Peshawar, Pakistan
July 22	Karachi, Pakistan
July 23	Delhi, India
July 24	Pathankot, India
July 25	Jalandhar, India
July 26–27	Mahal, India (Punjab)
July 28–29	Kotli, India (Punjab)
July 30	Kolysar, India (Lahul)
July 31	Gundala, India (Lahul)
August 1–2	Kyelang, India (Lahul)
August 3	Jispa, India (Lahul)
August 4	Patsao, Zing Zing Bar, India (Lahul)
August 5	Kilung, Serchu, India (Lahul)
August 6	Bangkang Zu, India (Ladakh)
August 7	Chakchu, India (Ladakh)
August 8	Tochu Phirche, India (Ladakh)
August 9	Pangmur, India (Ladakh)
August 10	Gyu, India (Ladakh)
August 11	Upshi, India (Ladakh)
August 12–13	Hemis, India (Ladakh)
August 14–18	Leh, India (Ladakh)
August 19	Srinagar, India (Kashmir)

August 20–22	Delhi, India
August 23	Bangkok, Thailand
August 24	Djakarta, Indonesia
August 25	Buitenzorg-sunagalih, Indonesia
August 26	Singapore
August 27–28	Manila, Philippines
August 29	San Francisco, California

*Beginning of the Himalayan trek.
†End of the Himalayan trek, the distance from Manali to Leh on this route being 240 miles.

Appendix 2

Elevations Of Main Points On Himalayan Trek

Manali	6,400 feet
Koti	8,100 feet
Rothang Pass	13,200 feet
Koksar	10,431 feet
Gundala	10,300 feet
Kyelang	10,323 feet
Jispa	10,500 feet
Patseo	12,400 feet
Zing Zing Bar	14,000 feet
Baralacha Pass	16,200 feet
Serchu	14,000 feet
Chakchu	15,800 feet
Gongrechen Pass	16,500 feet
La Chulung La Pass	17,000 feet
Pagmur Pass	16,500 feet
Staglang La Pass	17,479 feet
Gya	13,500 feet
Upshi	12,650 feet
Leh	11,555 feet

Appendix 3
Hints For Himalayan Travel

From June to October the monsoons sweep north from the Indian Ocean until they break against the high barricade of the Himalayas that run east and west across northern India. The southern slopes of the Himalayas are therefore usually wet and soggy during the summer months. While these storms usually dump most of their moisture on the southern side of the range, there are occasions when the Trans-Himalayan area is also dripping from the monsoons. The north slopes are not continuously wet; nor do the storms that curl over the Himalayas usually last more than a few hours. Nevertheless, it is wise to provide waterproof bags for all equipment, from food to clothing to cameras and medicines. They are indeed necessary for travel on the south slopes and extremely desirable for any Trans-Himalayan journey.

The best bags are made of plastic, which are obtainable in various sizes and which are semi-transparent. They make possible a classification of equipment in small, convenient packages whose contents can be readily ascertained without opening the bags.

The larger Army-type rubberized bags are good for bulky material such as sleeping bags; but they tear rather easily.

The best container for the waterproof bags is the standard Army duffel bag, whether one uses porters or animals for the transport.

Conventional tents made either of canvas or nylon are not desirable in the summer months. The air is very humid during the monsoons; and at elevations under eight thousand feet it is quite warm except during severe and exceptional storms. Protection is needed; but usually the protection of a pup tent or a lean-to is all that is required. Heavy rubberized fabrics are good, except that they “sweat” on the inside. A fabric that does not collect moisture on the underside is to be preferred.

Poles and pegs for tents and lean-tos must be packed, as there is little timber beyond the south slopes of these mountains.

Fuel must also be carried, as the only fuels that are available beyond the south slopes are dung and a few shrubs. White gasoline is difficult to obtain in this part of Asia. Kerosene is the best fuel; and the two-burner Primus stove is ideal for this area. Heat tablets (the chemical cakes that ignite easily) are useful for quick and short fires.

So far as food is concerned, one can get fairly well outfitted for a Himalayan trek in India. There are markets in Bombay, Delhi, and Calcutta where one can get a wide variety of canned goods. If time permits, shipment of one's favorite food can be made from this country; and the supply can be as varied as one's taste demands. But it is wholly unnecessary to ship tinned fruits, for they are available in good quality in the Asian markets.

The most convenient arrangement is to eat the native diet. The man who will cook on the trek will be a native. He knows best how to prepare the native food. The meals will be built largely around wheat, peas, and rice. If the trek touches villages, fresh eggs and chickens usually can be purchased, as well as an occasional sheep or goat. Some regions will have large supplies of game; and if hunting permits are obtained, the food supply may be supplemented from these sources. But a supply of wild game should not be counted upon.

To some the native food when eaten as a regular diet will be tiring. Yet it can be made agreeable even to the fastidious if familiar food from home is added to it. Canned hamburgers, meat balls and spaghetti, lima beans and ham, corned beef hash, boned chicken, cheese, bacon, or any of the many canned meats and vegetables which are familiar will break the monotony of the native diet. One can per person per day of this specialty food is wholly ample for the purpose.

Very few green vegetables will be available in the higher basins, so a generous supply of vitamins should be provided.

Dried soups, dried milk, and cocoa are the most desirable of all foods for high altitudes. Dried soups and dried milk (as well as dried eggs) should be shipped from the United States.

The native food plus a can of specialty food per day plus vitamins plus dried soup, dried milk, and cocoa make a light pack as well as an inexpensive one.

For the midday meal along the trail the Army TF-2 ration is ideal.

Dextrose and salt tablets are desirable for energy.

The medical kit should contain, in addition to the conventional first-aid equipment, a supply of aspirin, Empirin Compound, laxatives, and other simple medicines that a layman can dispense with safety. A foreigner who enters these parts will be expected to minister to the needs of his own entourage and to the sick whom he encounters.

One's physician can supply the antibiotics that will be useful in case of diarrhea and dysentery. Those that are specifics for amoebic dysentery should be included. Halazone tablets for purifying water should be carried, as the boiling of water at high altitudes in order to purify it is a dubious project.

Any good sleeping bag is adequate for summer travel in the Himalayas, since the weather is not severe even at sixteen thousand to

eighteen thousand feet. A cot is a luxury and quite unnecessary. An air mattress that is inflated by means other than the lungs is preferred.

Long underwear is desirable above eight thousand feet. A wool undershirt, a flannel shirt, and a windbreaker are usually necessary when traveling. The pack should contain a heavy, warm jacket. A rubber poncho that slips over the head and has a hood is the best for wet weather.

Sunglasses are a *must*. Skin lotions—those that prevent burning and those that alleviate sunburn—are absolutely necessary. Fair-skinned people should wear gloves at high altitudes and should provide a headdress similar to the Arab's *kafiyah* as a protection against the sun.

Some treks are organized with daily rations of rum for the porters or muleteers. I believe that a more desirable procedure is a daily ration of cigarettes. American cigarettes are highly prized.

Flashlights, lanterns, toilet paper, can openers, DDT bombs, and canteens for drinking water are necessary. (The canvas water bag is a handy item.) Kleenex is most useful.

Kitchen equipment can be obtained abroad. Ideally, a pressure cooker should be included. I shipped one from the States; but it was never used on my Himalayan trek because it was strange and unfamiliar to Budh Ram, my cook. It is better to take the cooking equipment the hillmen know and like. Plastic cups, bowls, and plates are much more useful along the trail than metal ones.

Paper money, rather than coins, is preferred and easier to carry. Notebooks, writing paper and envelopes, ink, toilet accessories, and jackknives complete the list of essentials. Those who go with cameras should specialize in color, for the air is so light that even distant scenes are superlative.

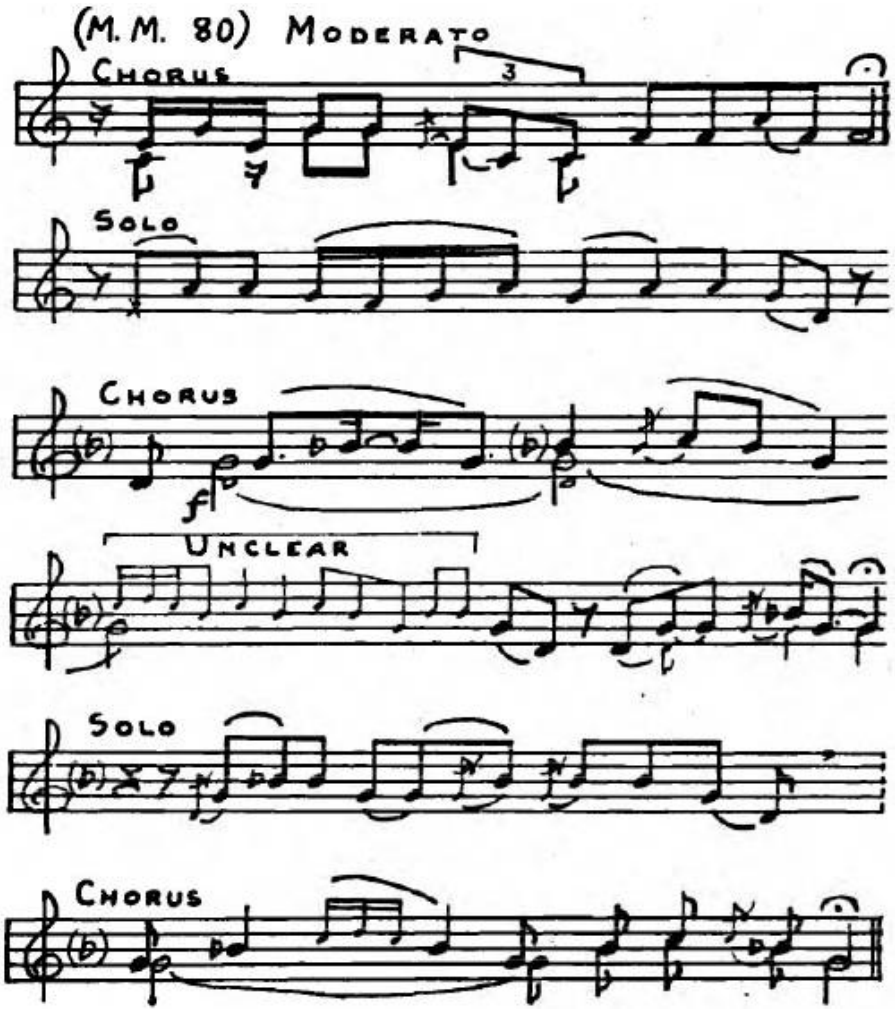
Botanists, ornithologists, geologists, and others who go for the purpose of making collections had best bring their special equipment from the States.

Appendix 4

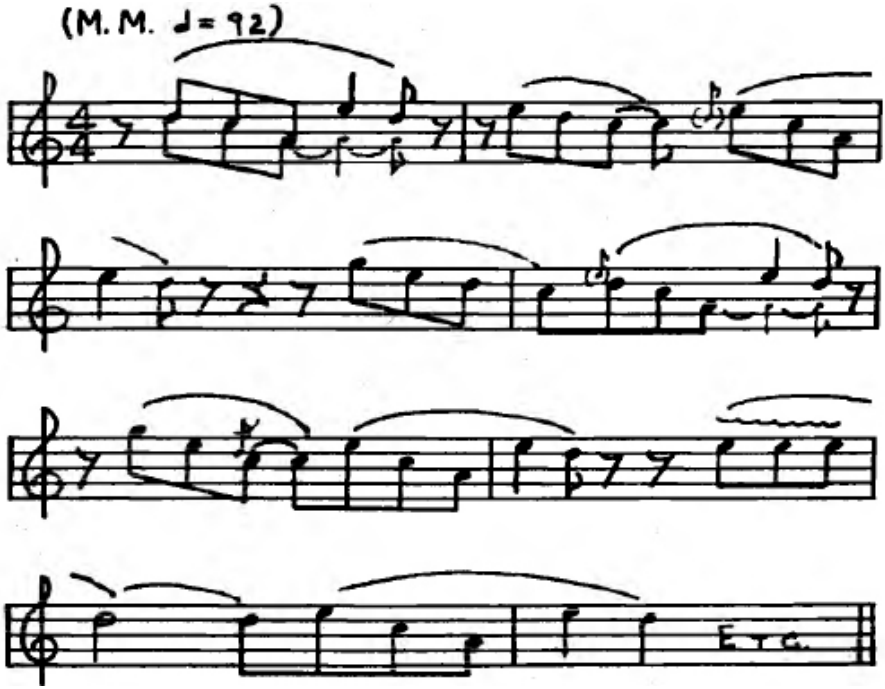
Music Transcriptions by Jenö Takacs

UNDETERMINED PITCH =

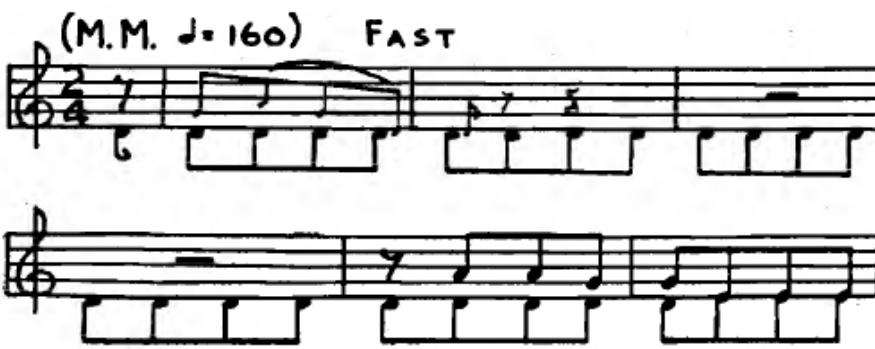
Kulu song about Kunjva, the lover

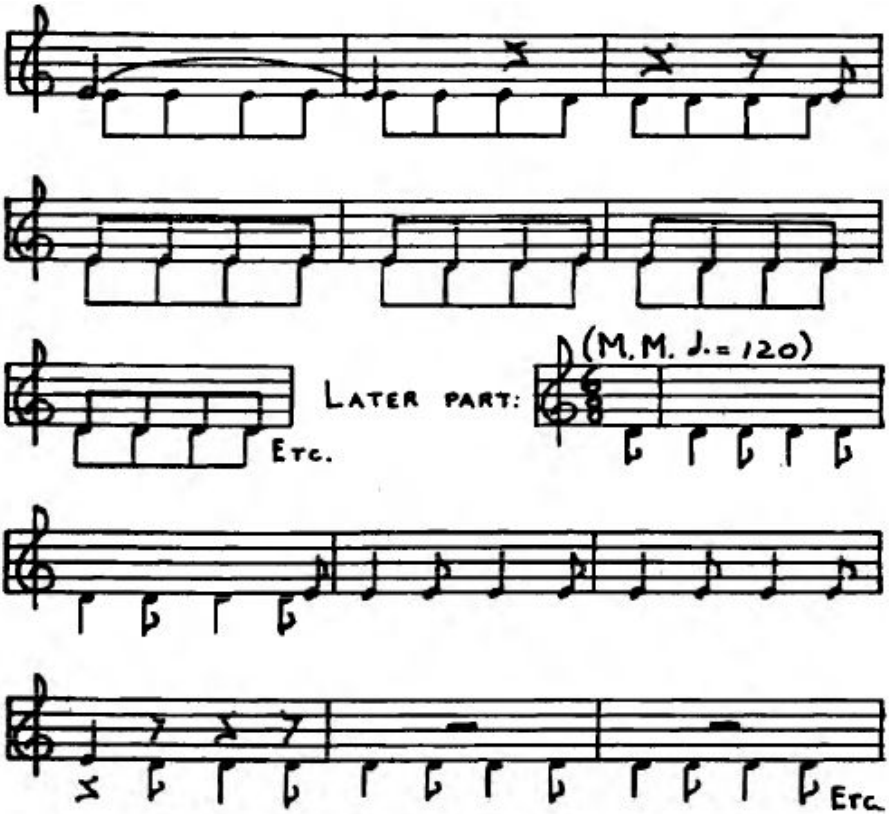


Lahuli song about the girl, Angmo

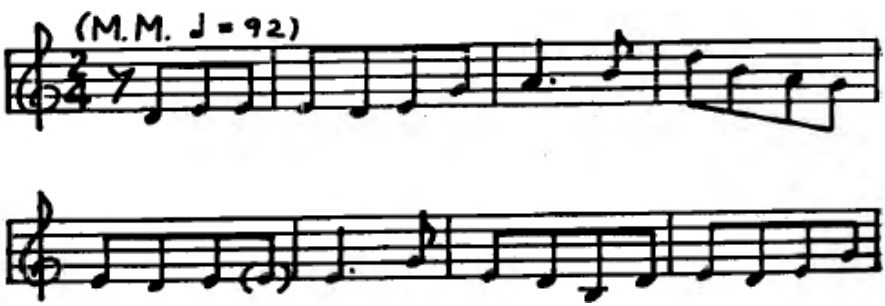


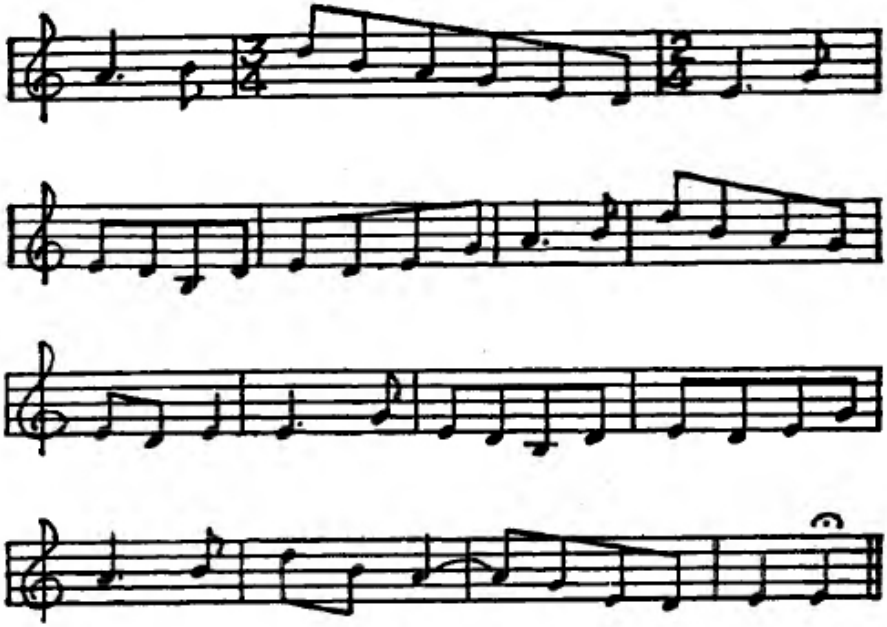
Lama chant from Hemis Monastery



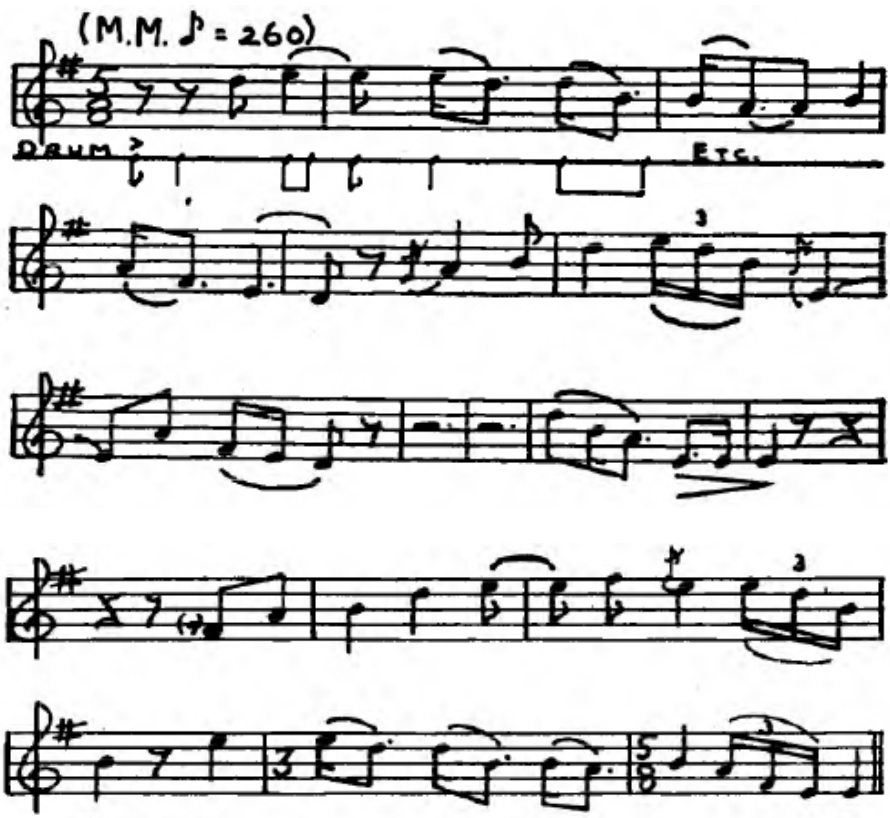


Ladakhi song about Tashiwangyal

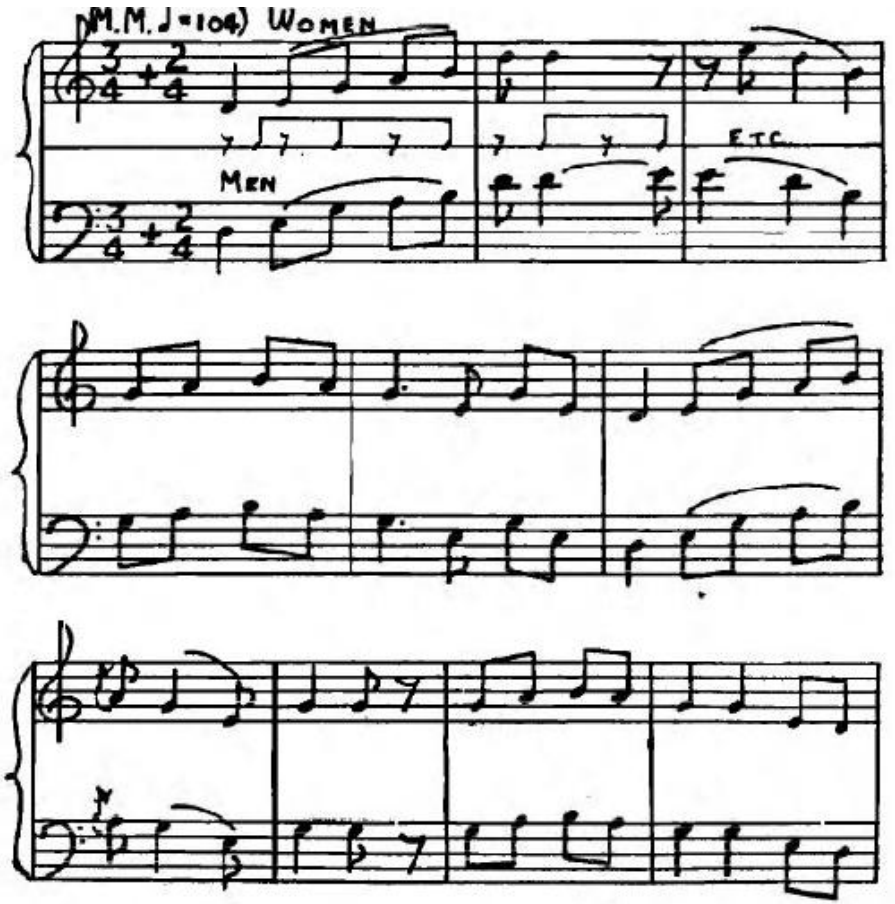


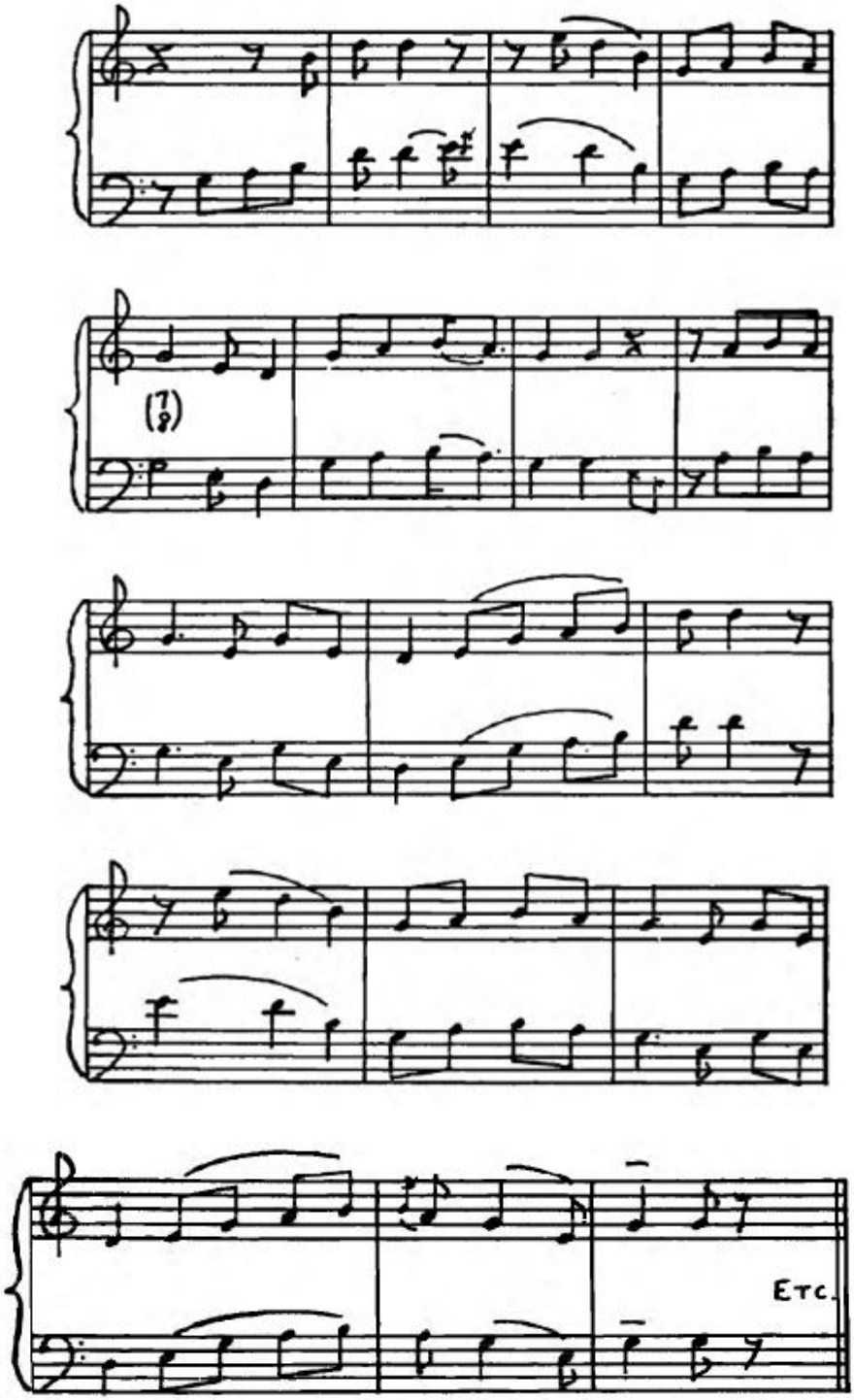


The Rose of Ladakh, by Zila in Leh

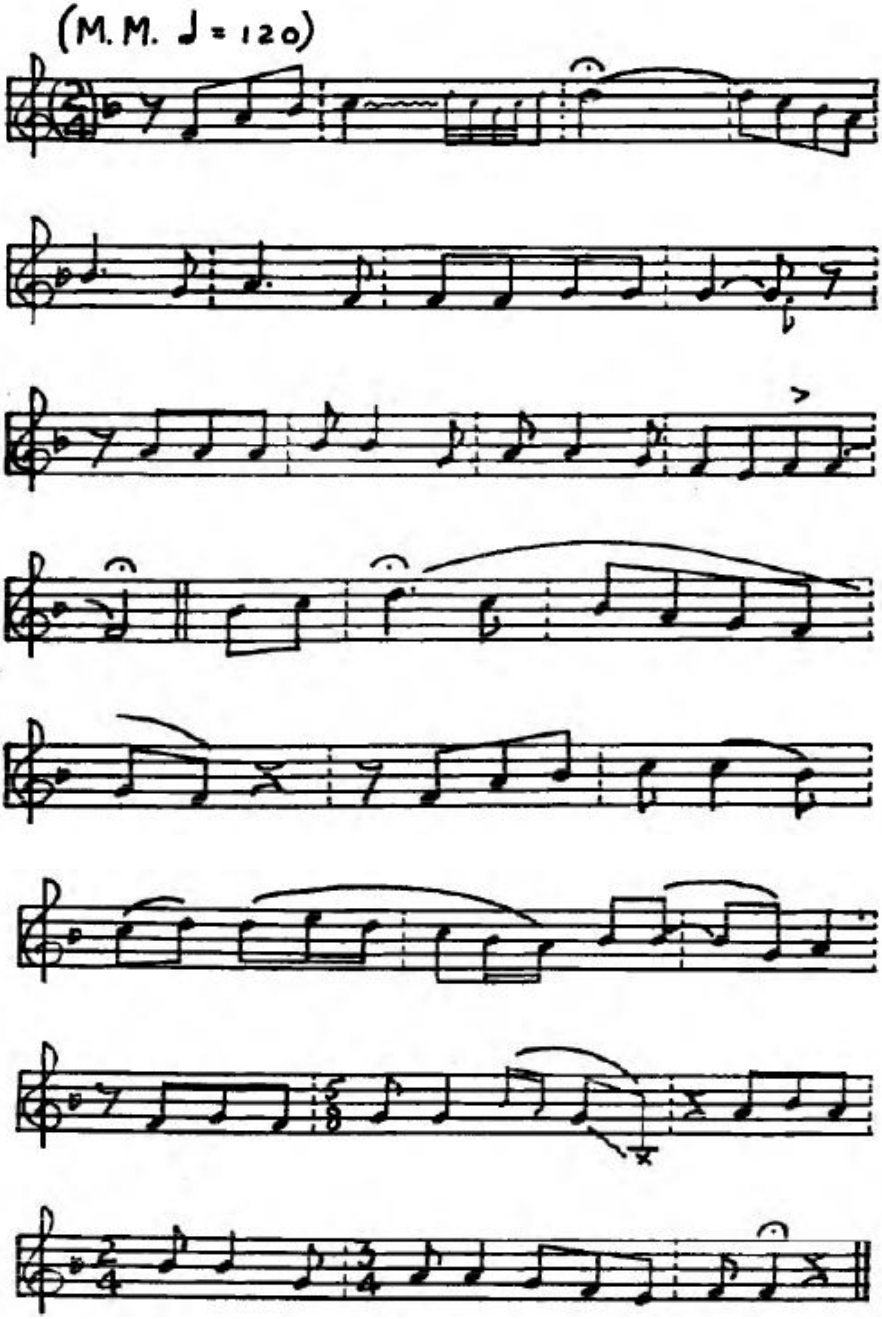


Ladakhi song about Tseringskyit





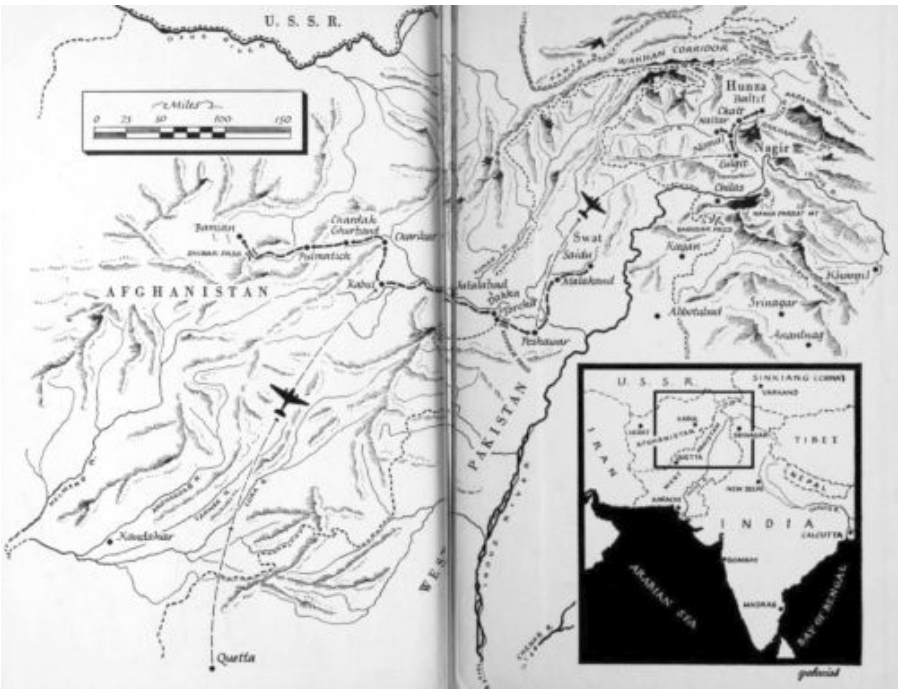
Nationalist song from Pakhtunistan



Polo song from Gilgit

(M. M. ♩. = 92)

DRUMS: 7 7 ETC.


U. S. S. R.
Miles
0 25 50 100 150
WAKHAN CORRIDOR
Hunza
Nagir
Chitral
Gilgit
Chilas
Swat
Saidu
Kagan
Khunjil
Srinagar
Abbotabad
Anantnag
Jalalabad
Peshawar
Bamian
Chardak
Ghurband
Charikar
Pulmatick
Kabul
AFGHANISTAN
PAKISTAN
Kandahar
Quetta
U. S. S. R.
SINKIANG (CHINA)
VARKAND
IRAN
TIBET
NEPAL
INDIA
CALCUTTA
ARABIAN SEA
BAY OF BENGAL
MADRAS
GOMBAY
NEW DELHI
QUETTA
KARACHI
gulmiad